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14. ABSTRACT

Conventional wisdom holds that Americans eschew casualties. The U.S.-led victory over Iraq combined with a lack of consensus on America?s role in the post-Cold War has generated an escalating political hypersensitivity to battle-deaths, both friendly and enemy alike. Consequently, in an effort to restrict ?needless? deaths, U.S. political and military leaders continue to restricted the means by which the military projects power. Unfortunately, the military has responded by injecting this aversion to casualties into current military doctrine. This paper challenges conventional wisdom and examines the implications from such perceptions. Furthermore, through multiple case studies, this paper highlights the ramifications of the U.S. military including the goal of casualty limitation as a cornerstone of its doctrine. Oddly, America?s lust for ?bloodless? war is based on a single premise: the American public cannot tolerate casualties. This study refutes this premise. Nevertheless, this presupposition has led to numerous political assumptions, dictums, and revisions of politico-military doctrine. Before supporting an intervention, the American public looks to its leaders to illuminate the vital interests and principles at stake. Paradoxically, politicians are looking to an uninformed public (in the form of public opinion polls) to dictate their political stance regarding a current or impending U.S. intervention at the same time. This standoff gives rise to the heralded ?CNN Effect? as the media?s graphic images and accounts remain unchecked. Furthermore, the outcry over events such as the debacle in Somalia represents the public?s questioning of U.S. policy, not intolerance for casualties. Unfortunately, many politicians have mis-indentified the root of the public?s concern, only focusing on and reacting to the catalyst for the uprising. Ultimately, the issue of casualties is not, and should not be, the deciding factor in the employment of the United States military. The American people will accept casualties provided the civilian leadership persuades them of that necessity. In fact, the U.S. public often demands military escalation in response to casualties. Rather than succumbing to the ideals of, or falling victim to the desires of, regional rogue actors, America?s political and military leadership must learn to exploit the realities of U.S popular support; thereby freeing themselves of unnecessary shackles.

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SHACKLED BY PERCEPTIONS

AMERICAN'S DESIRE FOR BLOODLESS INTERVENTION

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Abstract

Conventional wisdom holds that Americans eschew casualties. The U.S.-led victory over Iraq combined with a lack of consensus on America's role in the post-Cold War has generated an escalating political hypersensitivity to battle-deaths, both friendly and enemy alike. Consequently, in an effort to restrict "needless" deaths, U.S. political and military leaders continue to restricted the means by which the military projects power. Unfortunately, the military has responded by injecting this aversion to casualties into current military doctrine. This paper challenges conventional wisdom and examines the implications from such perceptions. Furthermore, through multiple case studies, this paper highlights the ramifications of the U.S. military including the goal of casualty limitation as a cornerstone of its doctrine.

Oddly, America's lust for "bloodless" war is based on a single premise: the American public cannot tolerate casualties. This study refutes this premise. Nevertheless, this presupposition has led to numerous political assumptions, dictums, and revisions of politico-military doctrine. Before supporting an intervention, the American public looks to its leaders to illuminate the vital interests and principles at stake. Paradoxically, politicians are looking to an uninformed public (in the form of public opinion polls) to dictate their political stance regarding a current or impending U.S. intervention *at the same time*. This standoff gives rise to the heralded "CNN Effect" as the media's graphic images and accounts remain unchecked. Furthermore, the outcry over events such as the debacle in Somalia represents the public's questioning of U.S. *policy*, not intolerance for casualties. Unfortunately, many politicians have mis-

indentified the root of the public's concern, only focusing on and reacting to the catalyst for the uprising.

Ultimately, the issue of casualties is not, and should not be, the deciding factor in the employment of the United States military. The American people will accept casualties provided the civilian leadership persuades them of that necessity. In fact, the U.S. public often demands military escalation in response to casualties. Rather than succumbing to the ideals of, or falling victim to the desires of, regional rogue actors, America's political and military leadership must learn to exploit the realities of U.S popular support; thereby freeing themselves of unnecessary shackles.

Chapter 1

Introduction

If we win one more such victory over the Romans, we shall be ruined.

— King Pyrrhus

Throughout the history of armed conflict, government and military leaders have had to reckon with the effects of casualties on strategy and warfighting. The logic behind warrior-King Pyrrhus' famous reply to those offering him congratulations after gaining a costly victory remains relevant in our times. Today, however, statesmen and generals consider battle losses from different perspectives. The former must weigh the repercussions of excessive casualties on both the level of civilian morale necessary to successfully prosecute a war, and ultimately on their own political futures. Military leaders, on the other hand, must balance potential losses against a wide variety of military factors including probable strategic or tactical gains, possible damage to the effectiveness of the forces employed and their ability to cope with enemy countermoves, and the difficulty of reinforcing or reconstituting the force. Likewise, the need to balance losses and gains is an element in any political leader's strategic calculations, and his conclusions will almost always be communicated implicitly, or even explicitly, to his military commanders.[1]

The Persian Gulf War proved to be a benchmark for future United States (U.S.) military operations. When President George W. Bush proclaimed "[b]y God, we've licked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all,"[2] he aspired to eradicate the haunting images of politically-driven body counts surrounded by ambiguous and constrained military objectives. The remarkably low number of casualties suffered by a U.S. force totaling over half a million troops is unparalleled in military history. Certainly, a new standard for subsequent military action had been set.

However, a heightened concern over and extensive speculation about the willingness of the American public to accept casualties in U.S. military operations has arisen in the post-Gulf War era. Conventional wisdom holds that the American public became less tolerant of casualties during the Cold War and is today still unwilling to support operations unless they are concluded at very low cost. If true, the implications for U.S. strategy, forces, and doctrine would be severe, and America's ability to deter or coerce future adversaries would likewise suffer.[3]

There appears to exist a profound discrepancy in our nation's perception about the extent to which American political leaders influence, or follow, the will of the public. Paradoxically, each looks to the other for guidance.[4] America's political leaders variously captured and ultimately lost public consensus as a result of their policies during the Korean and Vietnam wars. As casualties mounted in both contests, the electorate increasingly questioned what vital interests were at stake to justify the human and economic sacrifice. Both wars led to the defeat of incumbent political leaders. The lesson for all was that it was politically risky, if not suicidal, to preside over any limited

conflict that could not be decided quickly, with relatively few casualties. This conventional wisdom presides today.

Moreover, the Gulf War seemed to heighten national awareness of enemy civilian and military casualties. A possible by-product and serious danger of this heightened awareness is the fear that casualty-sensitivity may breed timidity in U.S. military leaders. This cascading effect was passionately echoed by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) General John Shalikashvili before the Senate Armed Services Committee. "I do not want to see us evolve to a point where we have expectations in this country of a war where nobody gets killed on our side, and where we don't have any collateral damage on the other side."[5] General Shalikashvili expressed grave concern that our military leaders will be second-guessed if their troops suffer casualties or cause civilian deaths. Fears of such armchair analyses might prompt officers to avoid decisive action altogether and, ironically, put their own troops in greater danger.[6] The imminent arrival of so-called nonlethal or disabling technologies may bring credence to Eliot Cohen's admonition against expecting "war *without* casualties."[7] Our culture seems intent on redefining war.

While casualties are unquestionably a matter of concern, what is not clear is the implications of our military explicitly including the goal of casualty limitation *as a centerpiece of its doctrine*. Moreover, America's post-Cold War hegemony as the world's only superpower has brought with it a political restriction on the military's ability to employ force. Edward N. Luttwak, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, points out that "[h]istorically, there have been tacit preconditions to great power status: a readiness to use force whenever it was advantageous to do so and an acceptance of the resulting combat casualties with equanimity, as long as the number

was not disproportionate."[8]   The Somalia debacle, precipitated by the loss of eighteen soldiers, and the Haiti fiasco, caused by the fear that a handful of U.S. troops might be killed while dethroning that country's military dictatorship, has possibly exposed a critical flaw in America's *great power* status.

Have the possible ramifications from assured political inquiries and hindsight restricted America's ability to exploit military success?   One may question why the shoot-down of a single airman over Bosnia resulted in a political "crisis" for the Clinton Administration, or how the deaths of eighteen servicemen abruptly reversed foreign policy in Somalia.   Finally, with the media's exploitative footage of "the Highway of Death" leading in part to the precipitate and premature termination of the Gulf War, it seems the U.S. has begun to take the next and very last step in restricting the conduct of war as we have begun to regret and question the killing of *enemy* soldiers. Accountability and justification now loom high over U.S. military operations.

The larger political issues involved in attempting to find a balance between casualties and policy objectives are beyond the scope of this study.   However, one of the most difficult dilemmas facing our nation today is how to respond effectively to domestic concerns about losses in conflicts abroad, while still showing the tangible signs of commitment necessary to maintain a claim as the world's leader.

The lopsided conflict with Iraq has already affected the way Americans understand modern war, prompting, as Eliot Cohen wrote, "the ornithological miracle of doves becoming hawks."[9]   More than one critic of aerial bombardment in the Persian Gulf has expressed a newfound belief in its utility as a tool of American foreign policy.   Anthony Lewis of *The New York Times* wrote in disgust at the reputed "surgical strike" capability

of coalition air forces fighting in the Gulf War. Since then, he has developed a keener appreciation of airpower, asserting that "a few air strikes in Dubrovnik" would have stopped the Yugoslav horrors in 1991, and that there is "a straightforward way to apply force" in Bosnia that involves "minimum risk": precision air strikes.[10] The congenial aura of precision bombing and sanitized warfare is not new; the capability merely now seems available.

The euphoria surrounding the remarkable coalition victory over Iraq combined with a lack of consensus on the U.S. role in the post-Cold War has created a political hypersensitivity to casualties. This study examines the specific conditions under which Americans will accept losses in U.S. interventions. It reveals that current U.S. military policy and decision-making is predicated on the conventional wisdom that the American public cannot or will not tolerate casualties. A more substantive element exists, however. First, the U.S. public *is* highly tolerant of casualties *when* vital interests are being threatened. Second, when U.S. casualties occur, the public is quick to expose and question weak and/or inadequate U.S. foreign military policy. Chapter 2 examines this perceived aversion to casualties held by the American public, dilutes the standing "conventional wisdom," and uncovers the criticality of justifying U.S. interventions as "vital." The aggrandized effect and implications of the media's reporting, particularly CNN, on our newfound sensitivity is explored in chapter 3. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 examine the political psyche that enveloped military decision-making during operations in Iraq, Somalia, and Bosnia, respectively. By examining presidential, congressional, and military policies entering these interventions, this study critically analyzes the ramifications of deficient leading assumptions and reactive decision-making. Likewise,

these historical cases reflect the ramifications of America's perceived demand for sanitized warfare and the virtual elimination of friendly and civilian losses. Additionally, chapters 4 and 6 address the results of America's heightened moral view on limiting enemy casualties, civilian and military, as well.

Unfortunately, America's perceived sensitivity to casualties is not a tacit entity. Past and current doctrinal and political policies are glutted with such guidance. By examining these policies concerning minimizing casualties during the conduct of military operations, chapter 7 reveals a substantive flaw in their foundation. Finally, chapter 8 draws conclusions, addresses the future military implications of an escalation of American sensitivity towards casualties, and makes recommendations to improve the posture of America's armed forces.

Notes

[1] Karl W. Eikenberry, "Take No Casualties", *Parameters*, Summer 1996, p. 109

[2] Rick Atkinson, *Crusade: The Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1993), p. 493.

[3] Eric V. Larson, *Casualties and Consensus: the Historical Role of Casualties in Domestic Support for U.S. Military Operations* (Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, 1996), p. 1.

[4] Chapters 7 and 8 explore this theme in greater detail.

[5] Transcript by the Federal News Service, Hearing of Senate Armed Services Committee, 21 Sep 95. Subject: Renomination of General Shalikashvili to serve as CJSC.

[6] Account taken from William Matthew's "Shali scores myth that wars can be casualty-free", *Army Times*, October 2, 1995.

[7] Eliot Cohen, "The Mystique of U.S. Air Power," *Foreign Affairs*, Jan - Feb 1994, vol. 73, no. 1, p. 109.

[8] Edward N. Luttwak, "Where Are the Great Powers? At Home with the Kids", *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 1994, p. 23.

[9] Cohen, p. 110.

[10] Ibid.

Chapter 2

Consensus Expectations

Nothing is more dangerous in wartime than to live in the temperamental atmosphere of a Gallup Poll, always feeling one's pulse and taking one's temperature.

— Winston Churchill

American political leaders have always been particularly sensitive to the kinship between the cost of war and U.S. public support. For example, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln remained concerned during the prelude to the 1864 election that the continued heavy loss of Union troops in the absence of any concrete battlefield gains might induce a weary electorate to abandon both him and the cause.[11]

The experience of the Korean and Vietnam wars has prompted many U.S. policy-makers and military leaders to believe that the American public cannot tolerate high casualties in regional conflicts. Conventional wisdom holds that as casualties mount, the public will demand a withdrawal of America's military commitment. This wisdom, commonly referred to as the "Vietnam syndrome," plagues our current political decision-making. Moreover, potential adversaries, such as Saddam Hussein, share this perception of America's aversion to casualties. For instance, as the Gulf crisis escalated, the Iraqi leader repeatedly threatened to turn the Kuwaiti desert into a killing field, confident that the fear of casualties would derail American plans for intervention.

This chapter questions the validity of present, conventional wisdom in regards to the public's perceived unwillingness to accept projected casualties and examines the role that political leaders play in gaining and maintaining the support of the American public for the employment of the armed forces.

Contesting Conventional Theory

There is little doubt that a majority of the American public is concerned about U.S. casualties when contemplating support for a military intervention.[12]   Recent polling data, which ranks the public's concerns regarding the use of the U.S. armed forces, shows that the loss of American lives is the single most important consideration.[13]   Such surveys reflect the conventional wisdom that, as the hypothetical cost in lives increase, fewer respondents find the number of projected deaths from the intervention to be acceptable. During the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf wars, polls revealed an apparent correlation between mounting casualties and declining support for the war. This statistic is misleading, however. Presented alone, it offers no context whatsoever in terms of an intervention's objectives, prospects for success, or any other characteristic describing the engaged U.S. stakes.

When asked to support a military operation, the American public ultimately must weigh the intangible benefits of achieving foreign policy objectives against the most

Tangible costs imaginable — the lives of U.S. service personnel. The metaphorical *ends vs. means* calculus can be used to understand the factors that are associated with support for military operations and a willingness to ask others to sacrifice their lives. Eric Larson, a fellow with the RAND Corporation, suggests this metaphor characterizes

support as being the result of a series of questions that political leaders and the public must answer collectively:[14]

- Do the benefits seem to be great enough?
- Are the prospects for success good enough?
- Are the expected or actual costs low enough?
- Taken together, does the probable outcome seem to be worth the cost?

Assessed in light of these questions, the historical record suggests that the role of casualties in domestic support for U.S. wars and military operations is somewhat different from the conventional wisdom. In fact, the record suggests a rather high degree of differentiation in the public's willingness to tolerate casualties, based upon the merits of each case. In the Korean War, for example, declining support for military operations was associated with a number of factors *other than* combat deaths. In short, the stakes in Korea declined from the threat of another world conflict to a limited war; the benefits and prospects climbed after Inchon and then fell again after the Chinese entry and the long, drawn-out stalemate during the truce talks.[15] As leaders turned from supporting the war, so too did the American public.

Our experience in Southeast Asia reflected similar public opinion trends. The role of casualties in eroding support in the Vietnam War appears to have been mediated by changing perceptions of the stakes or interests, progress in the war, and divisions among leaders.[16] In summary, one must consider the willingness of the public to tolerate casualties in the context of the perceived benefits of an operation, the interests at stake, and the principles being promoted. Ironically, the Persian Gulf War's conclusion remains engulfed by such debate.

One of President George Bush's key decisions during Operation DESERT STORM was to end the war when Iraqi forces had been defeated in the Kuwaiti theater but while

Saddam Hussein was still in power in Iraq. Clearly, the decision to stop the war was influenced in part by the aesthetic appeal of being able to boast "that the ground war routed the world's fourth largest army in exactly one hundred hours." As General H. Norman Schwarzkopf said of White House decision makers, a bit derisively perhaps, "I had to hand it to them: they really knew how to package an historic event."[17] Regardless, the decision was greatly influenced by a reading of public opinion.

During the spin-up to DESERT STORM, a January *Washington Post* poll suggested "it may be difficult to sustain public support for the war effort if the conflict results in even modest casualties."[18] Impelled by such conventional reasoning, President Bush's decision was predicated on minimizing U.S. casualties. As he opined prior to the war, "I don't think support would last if it were a long, drawn-out conflagration. I think support would erode, as it did in the Vietnam conflict."[19] By what standard was President Bush drawing such conclusions? By any reasonable standards, U.S. casualties in the Gulf War were so low they could hardly be said to have risen to even a "modest" level. Even if General Schwarzkopf's request for "a few more hours"[20] to attain all military objectives had extended another day or two, would this constitute a "long, drawn-out" conflict, analogous to Vietnam? Certainly not.

Regardless, President Bush underestimated the public's casualty tolerance level. While thousands of U.S. deaths might have caused severe political problems, evidence suggests that the public, once its blood was up, would probably have been willing to tolerate increased battle-deaths if the venture would result in the permanent and immediate removal of Saddam Hussein. Table 1 reflects such American sentiment:[21]

The United Nations has authorized the use of force in the Persian Gulf only to remove Iraqi troops from Kuwait. What do you think the United States should do? Should the United States stop fighting when Iraqi troops leave Kuwait, or should the U.S. continue fighting Iraq until Saddam Hussein is removed from power?

	Stop fighting When Iraqis leave Kuwait	Continue fighting until Hussein is removed	Don't know
Feb 24—Mar 1, 1991	39%	55%*	6%

* These 55 were then asked: Suppose removing Saddam Hussein from power would cost the lives of several thousand additional American troops. Do you think removing him from power would be worth that cost, or not?

Table 1

Worth the cost	Not worth the cost	Undecided
53%	35%	13%

Source: *New York Times*. Excerpt from Mueller, p. 268.

As table 1 indicates, the American public demonstrated a high level of tolerance to casualties when important interests were being sought. As the public's perception of benefits increased (removal of Saddam), its willingness to accept additional losses followed suit. John Mueller's research on public opinion suggests this American resolve is hardly an anomaly. It may have been this decision to end the war prematurely (and failure to capture America's will) which haunted President Bush in his re-election campaign in 1992.

Conversely, some analysts argue that the Gulf War experience (and its associated polling data) demonstrates that the American public is *not* overly sensitive to U.S. casualties. For example, Norman Friedman argues, "[e]ven though critics of the war

predicted casualty [figures] in excess of [the] Vietnam experience, the public was generally willing to support President Bush."[22]   Tables 2, 3, and 4 reflect the U.S. public's casualty expectations prior to and during the Gulf War.

If the U.S. takes (Now that the U.S. has taken) military action against Iraq, do you think that the number of Americans killed will be . . .

Table 2

	Less than 100	Several hundred	Up to a thousand	Several thousand	Tens of thousands	Don't know
Oct 18-19	6	15	15	35	18	11
Jan 10-11	4	11	13	44	18	10
Jan 17-18	12	21	14	28	4	21
Jan 17-20	12	24	16	29	4	15
Feb 7-10	6	21	17	39	8	9
Feb 22	10	22	20	28	5	15
Feb 24	10	31	20	20	3	16

Source: Gallop Poll, 1991. Cited in Mueller, p. 306-307.

Do you think it's worth risking the lives of American soldiers in order to demonstrate that countries should not get away with aggression, or not?

Table 3

	Worth risking lives of American soldiers to show aggressors they can't get away with it	Not worth risking lives of American soldiers	Don't know	*N*
1990 Aug 29	53	37	10	1206
1990 Nov 14	48	44	8	1031

Source: *Los Angeles Times*, 1990. Cited in Mueller, p. 250.

There are times when it is worth the country making sacrifices in blood money to achieve a more important return. Do you feel it is worth the loss of American lives and billions of dollars in this present (Mideast) crisis to serve notice on Iraq and other

aggressor nations that they cannot militarily invade and take over other nations and get away with it, or not?

Table 4

	Worth it	Not Worth it	Don't know	n
1990 Aug 17	62	35	3	1255

Source: *Los Angeles Times*, 1990. Cited in Mueller, p. 251.

Although Friedman's argument seems overstated, tables 2, 3 and 4 reflect that most Americans not only expected "several thousand" casualties, but considered the loss of U.S. lives to be commensurate with thwarting Iraqi aggression. Assessed in light of these and similar questions, the historical record suggests that the role of casualties in building and maintaining domestic support for American wars and military operations is substantially different from the conventional wisdom. Certainly, by looking at corresponding responses to complementing questions, one reveals a far more complex picture of public opinion regarding American military intervention. [23]

One pattern that emerges from the polling data collected during the Korean, Vietnam, and Gulf wars indicates that the American public is likely to be skeptical about U.S. military intervention, largely because of anxiety surrounding the possibility of American casualties, before a national commitment is made. Once committed, however, and vital interests remain at stake, the public shows little inclination to quit an intervention and instead resolutely supports an escalation of the conflict along with measures it deems necessary for a decisive victory. [24] For example, polling data revealed that while few Americans supported an immediate U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam in 1971, majorities preferred a gradual or orderly withdrawal, even if this resulted in the consequent loss of South Vietnam. However, when the safety of American prisoners of

war (POWs) was mentioned, 75 percent of respondents actually *opposed* U.S. withdrawal.[25] In short, empirical evidence regarding increased casualties and declining support neither points to majority support for immediate withdrawal, nor to majority demands for escalation. But, as Eric V. Larson implies, the U.S. public will support a war for a just cause, irrespective of the possibility of high casualties.

Nonetheless, even if the public indicates strong support for a U.S. military endeavor, many policy-makers fear that the public will abruptly withdraw its support if even a few U.S. troops are killed. Political leaders view the public's outcry over the deaths of eighteen American soldiers in Somalia after an October 1993 fire-fight as the key example of this dynamic. Some members of Congress reported receiving calls demanding the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops following this incident.[26] However, calls to congressmen are rarely an accurate measure of the public's stand on an issue. Polling data indicates that the majority of Americans did *not* respond this way. Immediately following the first reports of American deaths, including broadcast pictures of Somali mobs dragging dead American soldiers through the streets of Mogadishu, ABC News and CNN/*USA Today* conducted polls. These polls found, respectively, that only 37 and 43 percent of the public wanted to withdraw U.S. troops immediately.[27] Three additional polls taken over the next week produced similar results.

Surprisingly, a number of these polls found that a majority actually supported *increased* U.S. involvement in Somalia. CNN/*USA Today*, ABC, and NBC, respectively, found that 55, 56, and 61 percent of respondents favored sending more troops. ABC found that 75 percent favored a "major military attack" if American prisoners could not be released through negotiation.[28] In effect, should a regional adversary choose to take

actions that prompts American military intervention, U.S. public sentiment could encourage decision-makers to escalate quickly and unpredictably beyond the limitations they might wish to place on the conflict. In such situations, hostile regimes might find themselves at the mercy of an impatient and ruthless U.S. public.

Clearly, the American public reacts to more than casualties in evaluating the efficacy of U.S. foreign policy and military operations. Former Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Chester A. Croker noted, "the [Somalia] failure was strategic confusion followed by a collapse of political will when the confusion led to combat casualties."[29] Critics, who quickly pointed at America's intolerance for casualties following the Mogadishu street-battle as *the reason* for U.S. withdrawal, fail to acknowledge that public support for operations in Somalia had already declined to about four in ten by this time.[30] Indeed, political actions suggest that our leaders placed a disproportionate amount of weight on the American public's purported intolerance toward casualties.

The 'sine qua non' — Opinion Leadership

One of the key findings of this study is the central role of leadership in capturing domestic support for U.S. military involvement. One can certainly argue that political leader and the public are mutually constraining. While political leaders are elected to represent constituent concerns, many politicians appear poised to follow, as opposed to lead, public consensus. In effect, most U.S. political leaders have abandoned "opinion leadership." However, while there is ample, and compelling, empirical support reflecting the necessity for strong opinion leadership during American military intervention, the evidence supporting a "public-led" decision-making process appears much weaker.[31] As noted earlier, the American public is sensibly skeptical about military intervention.

When the reasons for introducing U.S. forces lack either the moral force or broadly recognized national interests, support may be very thin indeed — even small numbers of casualties may be sufficient to erode public support (as in Somalia). Undoubtedly, most Americans do not want lives to be sacrificed for any but the most compelling and promising causes, and they look to their leaders to illuminate just how compelling and promising those causes are.

The perceived unwillingness of the public to tolerate casualties in recent U.S. military operations has been due to the fact that majorities — and their leaders — did not perceive the interests and principles at stake to be vital. The public's preferences seem most closely associated with an assessment of the U.S. interests in the situation and the credibility of the alternatives that leaders and experts offer. Credibility is often judged on the basis of partisan or ideological cues.[32] Simply stated, once aware of the messages within a leadership debate, personal partisan (or ideological) leanings determine which messages individuals choose to accept or reject. Therefore, as Eric Larson describes, when bipartisan leadership consensus exists on a military intervention, because there are few negative messages available to the public, there is typically also consensus in the public. In this light, the "rally 'round the flag" pretext may be partially explained by the absence of critics in leadership positions. When the political and military leadership is characterized by dissension, however, the public also tends to become polarized. In short, leadership consensus or dissension figures prominently in building and maintaining public support for U.S. military operations and influencing U.S. policy and military strategy.[33]

Consequently, when political and other opinion leaders fail to agree with the President regarding the benefits of an intervention, there should be little surprise that the public also becomes divided. There were many disagreements among political leaders about whether the merits of recent U.S. military actions in the Gulf War, Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia would justify their possible costs. While the qualities of a democracy allows such debates, the potential consequences of these disagreements among leaders are quite sobering. For example, in their study of the Korean War, George Belknap and Angus Campbell found that, by the summer of 1951, increasing "hawks vs. doves" partisanship had led to divisions among leaders. Consequently, they found that this polarized leadership environment was mirrored in the public, suggesting that partisan differences among leaders invariably leads to an equally divided public followership.[34]

Summary

The historical record suggests that the American public is quite willing to accept casualties (and often demands escalation) when vital interests and principles are at stake. Conversely, Americans are reluctant to become entangled in the affairs of other nations and to use military force where interests are not perceived as vital. The public approval of a military operation typically carries with it a wide presidential latitude to conclude the operation in whatever fashion he chooses. This permissive environment can be lost, however, if the operation does not live up to the expectations or guarantees upon which the initial support was premised. Eric Larson offers an insightful solution to this impasse: "policymakers who are mindful of the premises under which support has been given for a particular U.S. military operation will often be able to build and sustain a permissive environment for conclusion of the operation." Policy-makers must ensure that

the conditions by which they gained consensus remain fixed. [35] Otherwise, politicians

must again capture public approval. Once the public is convinced that U.S. vital interests

are at stake, support appears unhampered by predicted or actual casualties. It is the

responsibility of our political leadership to ensure that American public support does not

become an Achilles' heel that can undermine U.S. deterrence strategies and efforts at

military   intervention.

Notes

[11] Karl W. Eikenberry, "Casualty Limitation and Military Doctrine", *Army Magazine*, February 1994, p. 16.

[12] Categories of casualties can include battle deaths, non-battle deaths, wounded in action, and prisoners of war (POWs). Unless otherwise noted, the word *casualties* will refer to deaths due to hostile action (or battle deaths) during this study.

[13] Eric V. Larson, *Casualties and Consensus: The Historical Role of Casualties in Domestic Support for U.S. Military Operations* (Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, 1996), p. 7. Excerpt taken from the source: Americans Talk Security No. 9, October 1988. The poll data reflects the importance of various factors in the use of U.S. Armed Forces. Eighty-six percent of the individuals surveys ranked "Number of American lives that might be lost" as "Very Important." (The "number of civilians that might be killed" ranked second at 79 percent.)

[14] Larson, p. 99.

[15] Larson, p. 23.

[16] John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion*, (New York: John Wiley, 1973), p. 266-267.

[17] H. Norman Schwarzkopf, General, USA, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, written with Peter Petre (New York: Bantam Books, 1992.), p. 545.

[18] John E. Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., 1994), p. 121.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *The General's War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1995), p. 513.

[21] This chapter relies on a body of public opinion polls to draw certain conclusions about popular attitudes prior to and during certain conflicts. Though polling data are often skewed by the innate wording of the questions, sample sizes, or specific target audiences, they are most certainly taken quite seriously by political leaders, as illustrated by the politically-massaged decisions enveloping the Gulf conflict.

[22] Mueller, p. 124. Mueller convincingly argues that Friedman's point is grossly overstated as no Gulf War "critics" ever estimated casualty figures as high as Vietnam.

Notes

However, based on poll data, Friedman's premise that the American public does not demand bloodless battles appears sound.

[23] The motivation behind most polls lies in the peculiarity of the questions asked. On most key issues (and depending on the responses), pollsters normally use a series of questions that progress from general to specific. One must examine the complete series of questions to determine the context by which the question was presented and before drawing congeal conclusions.

[24] The RAND Corporation, RAND Research Brief: "The Effects of War Casualties on U.S. Public Opinion," (Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, 1994), p. 1.

[25] Larson, p. 66. By comparison, 11 percent favored withdrawal and 14 percent had no opinion.

[26] Steven Kull, "What the Public Knows that Washington Doesn't", *Foreign Policy*, no. 101, Winter 1995-96, p. 111.

[27] Ibid. p. 112.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Chester A. Croker, "The Lessons of Somalia," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1995, pp. 2-8.

[30] Larson, p. 78.

[31] For a more detailed analysis of the roles played by politicians and the public during military operations, note Eric V. Larson's and John E. Mueller's arguments in their respective works.

[32] Larson, p. 100. In Korea and Vietnam, despite some support for the extreme, bi-polar options of immediate withdrawal and escalation of the war, the ultimate result was a grudging willingness to continue each war until an orderly withdrawal could be accomplished. In Somalia, a majority also preferred an orderly withdrawal following the return of U.S. servicemen that Aideed held hostage and rejected both immediate withdrawal and an increased -- or extended -- commitment. For most, the perceived U.S. benefits did not justify additional efforts to save Somalia from itself.

[33] Larson, p. 78.

[34] George Belknap and Angus Campbell, "Political Party Identification and Attitudes Toward Foreign Policy," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 4, Winter 1951 - 1952, p. 603.

[35] Larson, p. 102.

Chapter 3

"The CNN Effect"

The more widespread information is . . . the more congressmen you have becoming
secretaries of state.

— Carnes Lord,

—Security advisor to former Vice President Dan Quayle

As the last chapter illustrated, the public is not inherently sensitive to casualties alone. On the other hand, historical evidence indicates that public opinion does have substantial proximate effects upon policy-making in the United States. Granted, few Americans invest a great deal of time learning the intricacies of foreign politics. However, the media's immediate and exploitative nature does allow it to "touch" the American public. In fact, results of a 1987 study by Benjamin Page, Robert Shapiro, and Glenn Dempsey, found that news commentary (from an anchorperson, reporter in the field, or special commentator) has a very dramatic impact. A single commentary can cause a change in public opinion on an issue by more than four percentage points![36] Thus, by influencing the public, whose pressure forces policy-makers to respond quickly, the media can actually shape political decision-making.

Political Implications

Cable News Network's (CNN's) coverage of the Persian Gulf War completely redefined live satellite-fed television news. As Lewis Friedland states, "CNN pushed the boundaries of world news: no longer did the network merely report events, but through its immediate reportage, *CNN actually shaped the events and became a part of them*" (emphasis added).[37] Frank J. Stech, in his article "Winning CNN Wars," further argues that "[t]elevision images transmitted by satellite is [*sic*] irrevocably altering the ways governments deal with each other, just as it makes traditional diplomacy all but obsolete in times of crisis."[38] Instant access from the battlefield to the conference table and back again carries enormous political implications.

The U.S. administration is directly affected by this informational prodigy. As President George Bush candidly told other world leaders, "I learn more from CNN than I do from the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]. In most international crises now, we virtually cut out the State Department and the desk officers . . . their reports are still important, but they don't get here in time for the basic decisions to be made."[39] Certainly, instantaneous news coverage frames political decision-making. In effect, television news broadcasts offering simplified visions of, or emphasizing certain aspects of, particular events can shape or alter U.S. foreign policy. Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, in *News That Matters*, wrote that TV news sets "the terms by which political judgments are rendered and political choices made."[40] Political groups quickly seize images that serve their purposes and zealously exploit them.

The "CNN Effect" has broader implications than political jostling. During political and military debates surrounding the possible intervention in Haiti, Senator John Glenn

suggested the plan "could not pass the Dover Test" — the televised return of body bags from Port-au-Prince to the Air Force base in Dover, Delaware.[41] However phrased, CNN's coverage magnifies this line as a rhetorically powerful rejoinder to the use of military force abroad. Ironically, live media footage of U.S. transport aircraft departing Pope AFB enroute to Port-au-Prince certainly played a pivotal role in coercing Haitian leaders to succumb to U.S. demands.

The U.S. political and military leadership has adopted exploitation of the (instant) media as a tenet of modern warfare. However, one must not assume that the U.S. alone employs such a strategy. Dr. Jeffrey Record, a U.S. Senate aide and former legislative assistant to Senator Sam Nunn, recognized the media's effect during the Gulf War: "[DESERT STORM] planners could not have failed to foresee that Saddam Hussein would exploit every means available, including Cable News Network TV coverage, to portray the Coalition strategic air campaign as indiscriminate."[42] The effects of Saddam's tactics are examined later in this study.

Other pundits, such as Edward Luttwak, downplay the impact of television coverage. Luttwak points to the Soviet-Afghanistan war as an example eliminating the superficial explanation (immediate and graphic media footage) for the Soviets' novel refusal to accept even modest numbers of combat casualties. He argues, "the Soviet Union never allowed its population to see any television images, and still the reaction of Soviet society to the casualties of the Afghan war was essentially identical to the American reaction to the Vietnam War."[43] Luttwak's argument is incomplete, however. Censorship, in itself, still allows the public to make decisions based on their own political leanings. Furthermore, one must concede that in the United States, graphic imagery (such as the

slain U.S. ranger in Mogadishu) now ranks higher than censorship in media prioritization. Competition continues to coerce networks, such as CNN, to exploit any and all explicit footage as a rating enhancer.[44]

Effects on Decision-making

Policy-makers perceive that the most important effect of the electronic media is in shortened decision cycles and the increased availability of "flash" polling.[45] Even though polls often reflect little more than ephemeral and transitory opinion, high-level decision-makers are forced to act or to formulate responses or policy positions on the basis of information that is usually unreliable and incomplete. "There's really no time to digest information," observed a senior advisor to President Bill Clinton, "so the reaction tends to be from the gut."[46] Particularly during crises, television images are deeply imprinted on White House decision-making.[47] George Stephanopoulis, a former senior official in the Clinton White House, has noted, "CNN assures that you are forced to react at any time, and that's going to happen throughout the time of the Clinton presidency."[48]

In spite of these implications, live television images often provide positive political backdrops. Images of Patriot missiles intercepting Scuds in the night skies of Tel Aviv helped dissuade the Israeli government from attacking Iraq and fracturing the Gulf War coalition. When MIT Professor Theodore Postol, a critic of the Patriot, assessed the missile's performance in the Persian Gulf conflict, he overlooked the missile's role in "CNN warfare." "Most importantly," Postol wrote, "the serendipitous political and psychological contributions of Patriot in the specific circumstances of the Gulf War do not appear to offer a basis for further national security planning."[49]As Frank Stech points out, the dominating *strategic perception* was of Patriots defeating Scuds, vividly and

dramatically. This perception shaped and determined the strategic reality of Saddam Hussein's Scud offensive, regardless of the technical realities in the skies.[50]

Somalia Revisited

Conventional wisdom suggests that media reporting on the Somalia debacle drove both public opinion and subsequent foreign policy decision-making. The perceived popular willingness to use force so long as no American lives are lost in the process is what Charles Moskos, a military sociologist at Northwestern University, calls the "Somalia Syndrome." Moskos adds, "[t]he Somalia syndrome is what's shaping our consciousness now rather than the Vietnam syndrome . . . you don't take casualties."[51]

However, other experts disagree with Moskos' assertions. To better gauge the relationship between media reporting and presidential decision-making on Somalia, Eric Larson of the RAND Corporation, performed a quantitative analysis of media reporting and examined the sequencing between presidential decision announcements and increases in media reporting levels. His analysis refutes suggestions frequently heard about "the CNN effect" — i.e., that high levels of media reporting on the human misery in Somalia prior to the presidential decisions drove presidential decision-making.[52] The study shows a dramatic increase in CNN reporting on Somalia (but not in commercial television reporting) in October 1992, the period when clan fighting prevented United Nations (U.N.) relief efforts. However, this increased reporting on CNN had tapered off by the third week of October and did not increase until *after* the November 26 announcement to intervene. In this instance, Larson's study dispels the conventional wisdom of a CNN effect — that media images shaped U.S. decision-making.

With the exception of a directed manhunt for Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed, the Clinton Administration made few policy changes to its inherited Somali humanitarian and peacekeeping mission. Unfortunately, this seemingly feckless mission creep provided President Bill Clinton with his first, harsh taste of presidential subjugation. Immediately following the debacle in which eighteen U.S. rangers and Special Forces soldiers were slain, President Clinton ordered the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. armed personnel. Ironically, the same media which had launched an extensive campaign demanding U.S. humanitarian efforts into Somalia less than eighteen months earlier, now graphically showed the horrors that could rise from such seemingly quiescent missions. Most observers were quick to note that CNN's biting display of a Somali mob dragging a U.S. ranger's body through the streets of Mogadishu not only coincided with, but seemed to result in President Clinton's decision.

Foreign policy experts were harsh in their assessment of President Clinton's quick shift of U.S.-Somalia policy. That shift, the quick decision to withdraw, was "exactly wrong," commented former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Kissinger argues that failing to strike back at Aideed virtually guaranteed that the wrong lesson would be learned.[53] Though these lessons are examined thoroughly in later chapters, the perceived lesson available to future adversaries was clear: U.S. policy-makers and military leaders cannot stomach the loss of their own. Rather than representing the gun battle in Mogadishu as the climax of a peacekeeping mission gone astray, the administration was left without a coherent explanation of the catastrophe and seemed to have no clear goals in Somalia.[54] Certainly, such political indolence allows loose interpretations of U.S. foreign policies — failures or successes.

Conclusion

Preparing for "CNN wars" requires a readiness to shape messages into harmony with public perceptions of certain objectives. U.S. forces must be capable of responding to media demands for instantaneous information, and to exploit the rapid transmission of data to its advantage. Furthermore, the U.S. must assume that future adversaries will exploit this apparent "CNN effect." Just as greatness in battle requires an instinctive eye for the interplay of terrain and opposing forces, campaigns in media wars require a *coup d'oeil* for the *images juste*, an instinctive ability to incorporate compelling images in support of political and military goals.[55]

Notes

[36] Benjamin I. Page, Robert Y. Shapiro, and Glenn R. Dempsey, "What Moves Public Opinion," *American Political Science* Review, vol. 81, no. 1, March 1987, p. 31.

[37] Lewis Friedland, *Covering the World: International Television News Services* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1992), p. 2.

[38] Frank J. Stech, "Winning CNN Wars", *Parameters*, Fall 1994, p. 37.

[39] Friedland, pp. 7-8. This statement seems even more substantial given President Bush's former position as Director of the CIA.

[40] Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, *News That Matters* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 4.

[41] Jacob Weisberg, "Zero Tolerance", *New York*, October 10, 1994, vol. 27, no. 40, p. 21.

[42] Jeffrey Record, *Hollow Victory* (Washington: Brassey's Inc., 1993), p. 110. One needs only to read the Middle East Watch Report, *Needless Deaths in the Gulf War,* to admire the efficacy of Saddam Hussein's strategy of influencing certain special interest groups.

[43] Edward N. Luttwak, "Where Are the Great Powers? At Home with the Kids", *Foreign Affairs*, July - August 1994, vol. 73, no. 4, p. 25.

[44] Furthermore, the effects of some graphic footage may elicit unpredictable responses, such as public rage and/or demands for escalation.

[45] Eric V. Larson, *Casualties and Consensus* (Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, 1996), p. 6.

[46] Recounted in Thomas J. McNulty, "Television's Impact on Executive Decisionmaking and Diplomacy," *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, vol. 17 (Winter 1993), pp. 81-82.

[47] According to Stech, CNN permeates discussion from the earliest senior staff meeting and the president's intelligence briefing an hour later to those meetings

Notes

conducted at the end of the day in the Oval Office or over drinks upstairs in the official residence . . . . The normal information flow into the Oval Office is vastly altered by live video images.

[48] Quoted in David S. Broder, "Looking Ahead in '92," *Boston Globe* (6 April 1994), p. 15.

[49] Theodore Postol, "Lessons of the Gulf War," *International Security*, vol. 17 (Summer 1992), p. 119.

[50] Stech, p. 45.

[51] Weisberg, p. 21.

[52] For a complete recapitulation of the study, note Eric V. Larson, *Casualties and Consensus* (Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, 1996) pp. 45-47.

[53] Stech, p. 42.

[54] See Ambassador Robert B. Oakley's account, "What We Learned in Somalia," *The Washington Post*, 20 March 1994, p. C7, and Rick Atkinson's series on the Ranger and Delta Force operations published in *The Washington Post* in February 1994.

[55] Stech, p. 44.

Chapter 4

Exorcising Vietnam's Ghost? The Persian Gulf War

In war there is much to be said for magnanimity in victory, but not before victory.

— Former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher

The need to balance losses and gains is an element in any strategic calculation. The uncertain nature of war may lead to indecisiveness as leaders suspend activity while they hope for the arrival of more precise information. Commanders are loathe to commit forces and risk their destruction when there is not a high probability of success. Force protection is not a new phenomenon. An army may avoid decisive engagement as part of an overall strategy designed to exhaust an enemy (Fabius versus Hannibal), or to bide time while building up one's strength (the Allies against the Axis in the early years of World War II).[56]

The imperative of minimizing casualties was the leitmotiv of the entire Persian Gulf intervention. Such sensitivity to loss has few precedents in American military history. In addition, decision-making during the Gulf War suggests that America has impetuously increased its moral obligations during military interventions. Where collateral damage was once considered an unfortunate reality of armed warfare, DESERT STORM marked the first conflict where U.S. political and military leaders felt no longer able to withstand the hindsight and scrutiny of "collateral" deaths. Finally, a peculiar "twist" developed

during the final hours of the Persian Gulf campaign: an unprecedented political decision to limit enemy deaths. Certainly, casualty limitation consumed the entire Gulf conflict.

Shielding Our Own

Saddam Hussein thought that he, too, understood America's sensitivity and lack of resolve. In a meeting with U.S. Ambassador to Iraq April Glaspie in July 1990, Saddam scorned America's inability to stomach "10,000 dead in one battle" and its incapacity to pursue a major war to a conclusion.[57] Given the prevalent perception of events in the war, perhaps Saddam's predictions were not far off the mark. The loss of two F-16s on 19 January brought about the cessation of daylight raids against Baghdad targets. Following the additional loss of two A-10s on 15 February, an increased fear of further casualties prompted the withdrawal of remaining A-10s from attacks against Iraq's elite Republican Guard.[58] This sensitivity prevailed throughout the campaign. In fact, many critics are convinced the main reason President George Bush declared victory after 100 hours of the ground war, without deposing Saddam Hussein, was that a push to Baghdad might have resulted in a politically intolerable number of dead soldiers.[59] John Mueller, a political scientist as the University of Rochester stated: "It was very clear that had significant casualties been suffered, support would have dropped off very quickly."[60] The ramifications of such expectations on the conduct of future war are incogitable.

The Persian Gulf War ended abruptly, some would say prematurely, for reasons that are telling about the way we fight these days. Harvey M. Sapolsky and Jeremy Shapiro suggest that when General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander of the Allied Coalition Forces, stated in a press conference that all military objectives had been met by the fourth day of ground operations, it "*required* that senior officials in Washington had to order the

war ended immediately."[61] As General Schwarzkopf suggested in his memoirs, to do otherwise would leave officials open to unbearable public criticism that they were allowing American soldiers to die for political, not military objectives.[62] The supreme irony remains that *political* objectives *are* the ultimate goals of *military* operations!

In spite of this predisposition, Washington's sensitivity to losses neglected widespread American animosity toward Saddam Hussein — feelings fueled by Bush's own pre-war speechcraft.[63] As table 5 reflects, the American people at large did not share this political purview.

Is it enough for the United States to drive Saddam Hussein's troops out of Kuwait, or should the United States also see to it that Saddam Hussein is removed from power?

Table 5

	Is enough to drive Saddam's troops out of Kuwait	U.S. should remove Saddam from power	Don't know
Jan 19, 1991	12%	82%	6%

Source: CBS/*New York Times*. Excerpt from John E. Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War* (Chicago: The University of
Chicago Press, 1994), p. 265.

As table 5 suggests (and chapter 2 concluded), the political assumptions did not reflect the public's demand. In fact, 83 percent responding to a Gallop poll "approved of U.S. intervention, even though more than 80 percent believed the "situation will develop into a bloody ground war with high numbers of casualties on both sides."[64] Significantly, and despite such fears, table 5 shows that 82 percent of respondents wanted the U.S. to stop the fighting only after Saddam was removed from power. Perhaps this political timidity lends credence to Jacob Weisberg's argument, "when it comes to the profession whose *raison d'être* is risking itself on behalf of the nation, we can't bring ourselves to face the moral responsibility [of losing U.S. lives]."[65]

Discrimination: "Par Excellence?"

Perhaps no single principle of the just war tradition received a more fulsome invocation by U.S. political and military leaders during the Gulf War than the principle of *discrimination*: avoiding harm to civilians, and renouncing massacres and wanton violence.[66] The Bush administration effectively persuaded the American public that U.S. conduct in this war had achieved unprecedented heights of ethical sensitivity.

In his January 16 address announcing the beginning of the air war, President Bush assured the world, "[w]e have no argument with the people of Iraq. Indeed for the innocents caught in the conflict, I pray for their safety." Twelve days later he told the Religious Broadcasters network: "From the very first day of the war, the allies have waged war against *Saddam's military*" [emphasis added].[67] Daily press briefings from Central Command in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and from the Pentagon emphasized that the air war was being conducted solely against military targets. On February 6, President Bush told reporters during a press briefing: "[t]his high technology weaponry, ridiculed in the past, [is] now coming into their [*sic*] own and saving lives — not only American lives and Coalition lives, but the lives of Iraqi citizens."[68] The U.S. president had clearly articulated a prime aim of Operation DESERT STORM: minimizing collateral damage, especially civilian casualties.

This effort to limit civilian casualties was further embodied in clear-cut orders. Pilots were instructed to return to base with their bombs and missiles whenever they were unable to get a clear "fix" on their assigned targets. Pilots were not to drop bombs in the general vicinity of the targets; nor were they to aim freely at "targets of opportunity." Such "opportunities" translated to inherent risks to Iraqi citizens that U.S. political

leaders refused to accept. In fact, during bombing runs, U.S. pilots were to accept *personal* risk in order to reduce the risk of "collateral damage" to civilians.[69]

Throughout the war, U.S. pilots operated under strict rules of engagement (ROE) regarding target recognition. For example, during the war F-117 pilots flew 1270 combat sorties and dropped over 2000 tons of bombs, while under strict orders to attack targets only if they had positive identification and good weather conditions.[70] By all accounts, coalition pilots seemed to have obeyed the ROE scrupulously, to the point of bringing back unexpended ordnance when targets were not clearly identifiable.

Certainly, Saddam Hussein's tactics did not simplify target identification. Saddam consistently used command and control centers as civilian shelters, parked combat aircraft near religious and archaeological sites, and used civilian convoys as camouflage for mobile Scud launchers. According to U.S. pilots who flew in the Gulf War, it was quite apparent that the Iraqi leadership knew of the Coalition goal to avoid civilian deaths and took advantage of this by deliberately locating military functions to ensure their own survival in population centers and traditional "no-drop" areas (i.e. hospitals, schools, etc.).[71] In one instance, Hussein's forces placed two MIG-21 fighters next to a ziggurat (temple) in the ancient city of Ur in the Euphrates River valley. The city of Ur is an archaeological site of great historical significance, as one of the oldest cities in the world, dating to before 3000 B.C. Since these aircraft could have virtually no military value while in that position, one can only reach the conclusion that Saddam was trying to "bait" coalition forces into attacking for the purposes of garnering worldwide condemnation for aggression.[72] Fortunately, it did not work. However, it demonstrates how an aggressor

may try to cynically manipulate the law of armed conflict for political advantage.[73] In retrospect, U.S. efforts were extraordinary in limiting injuries to Iraq's citizens.

Regrettably, the law of armed conflict often becomes simply another tool for aggressors in the world. During the Gulf War, Iraq used incidents of civilian casualties and damage as its main propaganda weapon to undermine public support for the war among the coalition countries. Nevertheless, as Table 6 illustrates, allied bombing achieved unprecedented levels of success in terms of minimizing civilian deaths.

Table 6

TARGET IMPLEMENTER	DATES	BOMB TONNAGE	CIVILIAN DEATHS	CIVILIAN DEATHS PER TON OF BOMBS
Tokyo/U.S.	9-10 March 1945	1,655.00	83,793	50.330
Hamburg/U.S., U.K.	24-30 July 1943	5128,12	42,600	8.030
Dresden/U.S., U.K.	14-15 Feb 1945	7100.50	25,000	3.520
Linebacker II (Vietnam)	18-20 Dec 1972	1732.60	3,988	.080
Gulf War/Coalition	17 Jan—27 Feb 1991	60,624.00	3,000[*]	.048

Source: Data extracted from Shotwell, p. 52.   * Using worst case estimates (2500-3000) from Middle East Watch (MEW)

Unfortunately, U.S. efforts to minimize civilian deaths fell short in the eyes of many critics; most notably, from the organization Middle East Watch (MEW). Much of MEW's criticism surrounds the difficult questions concerning the targeting of "dual-use" objectives (those with both civil and military value). U.S. military rules allow attacks on "military objectives" if they effectively contribute to enemy military action and their destruction offers a definite military advantage.[74] Most significantly, MEW accused the U.S. of callously mismatching targets with weapons. MEW alleged that smart weapons accounted for only 8.8 percent of munitions used, implying that air planners ignored the

"principle of proportionality" and violated the "principle of discrimination."[75]   If accepted, MEW allegations would imply that the existence of precision technology has precipitously increased the humanitarian standards for the conduct of military operations. MEW studies, on the other hand, failed to recognize that there was only a limited supply of precision guided munitions (PGMs). Furthermore, no law requires that belligerents use only PGMs. Regardless, repercussions and constraints have resulted from such vocal sensitivity.

Ironically, the "shelter" at Al Ameriyya (also known as Al Firdos) was struck by two F-117-delivered *PGMs* on 13 February 1991, killing between 200 and 300 civilians. From the beginning of the war, this facility was known to contain command and control equipment, though it was kept off the targeting list since it had not been activated for use in the Iraqi war effort. In the meantime, it had been cordoned off with barbed wire, covered with camouflage paint, and protected by armed guards — all measures inconsistent with that of civilian use, especially that of an air raid shelter.[76]

When the Iraqis activated the Al Firdos facility as a command and control center (several days into the war), planners placed it on the target list.[77] Furthermore, the Iraqis had painted the roof to look as if it had already been struck.[78] Various delays prevented an attack until the early hours of 13 February. Unfortunately, and unknown to Coalition air planners, certain Iraqi families were using the upper levels of the Al Firdos bunker at night. That morning, CNN reported hits on the facilities by two GBU-27s, both aimed at the same point on the bunker's roof by two different F-117s, causing hundreds of civilian casualties.[79] The Iraqis quickly exploited the tragedy, and in the wake of dramatic media coverage, a sharp reduction in Coalition air strikes against leadership targets ensued.

By the laws of armed conflict, a command and control facility cannot be shielded from attack by the deliberate placement of civilians in it. Iraq had clearly violated its obligations under international law. However, it was the Coalition Forces who seemed most affected by the attack. Among other changes, General Schwarzkopf thereafter personally reviewed *any and all targets* selected for air strikes in downtown Baghdad.[80]

Despite follow-on efforts to justify the attack, political sensitivity delimited future attacks.

In retrospect, Washington officials seem to have been overly concerned about public relations problems that might have been caused by collateral Iraqi deaths. By categorizing the Al Firdos tragedy as "a devastating blow to the American public's support for the war," U.S. politicians were, ironically, subscribing to the same beliefs of Saddam Hussein — that a "couple of well-publicized and suitably destructive air raids on Baghdad would cause American popular support for the war to crumble in revulsion."[81] Certainly, the administration seems to have neglected poll indications. As tables 7 through 9 indicate, even after the Al Firdos bunker incident, the American people remained quite insensitive to Iraqi casualties.

Do you think United States bombers should pass up some possible targets if Iraq civilians might be killed in the attack or not?

Table 7

	U.S. bombers should pass up possible targets if civilians might be killed.	Should not pass up targets	Don't know
1991 Jan 20	37%	56%	6%
1991 Feb 14	34%	60%	5%

Iraq says hundred of civilians were killed when the United States bombed an air raid shelter in Baghdad on Wednesday. The United States says the site was being used as a military command bunker. Have you heard or read about this? (92% Yes) Do you think the site was a legitimate military target or not?

Table 8

	Bombing shelter was a legitimate military target	Shelter was not a legitimate target	Do n't know
1991 Feb 14	81%	9%	11 %

Do you think the United States should stop bombing the city of Baghdad in order to avoid civilian deaths or not?

Table 9

	U.S. should stop bombing Baghdad in order to avoid civilian deaths	U.S. should not stop bombing Baghdad	Don't know
1991 Feb 14	20%	75%	5%

Thus, the political assumptions made and subsequent restrictions placed on military planners following the Al Firdos bunker tragedy reflected a solid disconnect between U.S. political interpretations of and bona fide American sensitivity toward Iraqi deaths. Unfortunately, U.S. decision-making in the course of the Iraqi retreat proves this fallacious disconnect was hardly an anomaly.

The Forgotten Tenet

After the general retreat of the Iraqi forces on the evening of 25 February 1991, interdiction sorties bore down on the retreating columns of Iraqi forces flowing north. Mutla Ridge, the high ground to the west of Kuwait City, was the first place Coalition air strikes stopped the fleeing columns. The major road to Basra passing over the bluffs of the ridge was a natural chokepoint. Once air attacks halted the forward elements of these columns, Coalition aircraft attacked the stagnant traffic throughout the evening, leaving a scene of abandoned and burning vehicles approximately two miles long.[82] One pilot describes the bombing as "[s]hooting fish in a barrel," an analogy quickly exploited by news reporters back in the United States.[83] The news media dubbed this scene "the highway of death" in the immediate aftermath of the war.

Bowing to the graphic scenes of military destruction, American political and military leaders called for the cessation of hostilities, abruptly ending the Persian Gulf War. Washington's "knee-jerk reaction"[84] to the media's manipulation of the Iraqi withdrawal undermined a basic tenet of the U.S. armed forces: *exploitation*. Former Air Force Chief of Staff, General Michael Dugan later criticized General Colin Powell for recommending the war's foreclosure: "His [Powell's] decision was based solely on a picture — purely political. It was not his place [as Chairman, JCS] to make such a decision or recommendation."[85] Dugan felt that Powell's choices were based on political reasons, *not* military utility, which should have been his key concern.

A year after the Gulf War, White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater supported Powell's recommendation: "Right after the war they [the media] were blasting us for the 'Highway of Death.' If we had gone on [to Baghdad], it would have been 10 times

worse."[86] As General Norman Schwarzkopf remarked, "Washington was ready to react, as usual, to the slightest ripple in public opinion."[87]

Although General Schwarzkopf's view may have been correct, poll data confirms that no such ripple ever occurred.[88] Table 10 typifies standing U.S. popular sentiment:

Some countries say United States forces are inflicting (inflicted) excessive damage on Iraq. Do you think the U.S. is causing (caused) excessive damage to Iraq, or is (was) the damage what should be expected in wartime?

Table 10

	U.S. damage to Iraq excessive	Damage about what should be expected in wartime	Damage less than expected	Don't know
1991 Feb 28	6%	83%	6%	6%
1991 Mar 4-6	6%	83%	8%	3%
1991 Apr 1-3	3%	80%	11%	6%

Source: *New York Times*, CBS/*New York Times*, 1991. Excerpt from Mueller, p. 319.

As Mueller's poll data suggests, the public's view of Iraqi civilian deaths and its unalarmed reaction to the horrors of the Gulf War indicate that the American people were fairly insensitive to Iraqi casualties, even though they appeared to have harbored little ill-will toward the Iraqi people. In short, the American public subscribes to the conventional theory that collateral damage is a misfortune of war. Unfortunately, the U.S. political leadership chose to discount reliable poll indicators. Ultimately, a stronger and larger Republican Guard than expected returned safely to Iraq.

Ironically, General Powell's decision resembled that of General George Marshall when he [Marshall] rejected Churchill's plea to beat the Soviets to Prague during World War II, with the judgment that he was "loathe to hazard lives for purely political purposes."[89] Though many Gulf commanders in the field were shocked by Powell's

decision, senior Washington officials were already inclined in that direction. In the hours before the war's end, they were on the phone to Schwarzkopf's headquarters in Riyadh pleading: "[w]asn't there some way to avoid more of this?"[90]

The decision to halt the ground offensive reflected a heightened political aversion to casualties of any sort. Preceding postwar Greenpeace reports that alleged Iraqi troops had "no exit, little time, nor adequate communication to allow for proper surrender in the field," the U.S.-led coalition abruptly ended the greatest rout of modern military history.[91] As there is no known rule of law prohibiting attacks on retreating forces, nor are military forces considered noncombatants unless they have properly surrendered, the implications derived from President Bush's decision are sure to cause consternation among war termination theorists. Unfortunately, such "media-satisfying" resolutions beg the question of our "Just War criterion." Perhaps it tells us that the carnage of the "Highway of Death," as desperate Iraqis were relentlessly bombed and strafed as they fled, was not a fight by *jus in bello* standards, but a massacre, for those incinerated had no capacity to fight back.[92] If one accepts such conclusions, then, has "decisive force" been preempted by morality? Likewise, have we witnessed the removal of "overwhelming force" as a tenet to U.S. military strategy?

General Schwarzkopf's reference to the Gulf War's ground battle as quickly "becoming the battle of Cannae, a battle of annihilation" represents a modern paradox — balancing humanity and armed conflict. Schwarzkopf, a scholar of military history, was referring to Hannibal's slaughter of at least 50,000 trapped Romans at Cannae in southern Italy in 216 B.C. Hannibal's smaller army outmaneuvered the Romans, trapping them in a classic double envelopment.[93] Bush's decision to halt the offensive, according to

Schwarzkopf, was a "very humane decision and a very courageous decision on the part of the President." Why courageous? "Its one of those decisions that historians are going to second guess forever."[94]

Conclusion

Perhaps expectations of nearly bloodless victories have been raised unduly high by the stunning success of the Persian Gulf War. And, as Edward Luttwak suggests, perhaps the United States has become too soft and sentimental to act like a Great Power. Regardless, the most troubling aspect of our casualty aversion is its normative acceptance by many in the armed forces. In retired Colonel John A. Warden III's view, "excluding any threat to our survival, no American government is likely to undertake military operations that promise more than the handful of casualties we suffered in the Gulf."[95] Future strategists cannot ignore the implications from such credible sources.

For Clausewitz, the essence of war was force. Public convictions during the Gulf conflict seem to have eluded the Bush administration and some postwar analysts: once provoked, Americans insist on retribution in the form of overwhelming force. Moreover, the American public generally comfortably accepts the collateral deaths that befall upon any armed conflict. Unfortunately, many U.S. political and military leaders have mis-identified the heralded "ghost of Vietnam." Casualty sensitivity cannot replace foreign policy mistakes. Consequently, battle and bloodshed cannot be avoided. Today, Clausewitz's dictum, *let us not hear of generals who conquer without bloodshed*, seems overcome by ethics sensitivity.

Notes
[56] Karl W. Eikenberry, "Take No Casualties," *Parameters* (Summer, 1996), p. 109.

Notes

[57] Mark J. Conversino, "Sawdust Superpower: Perceptions of U.S. Casualty Tolerance in the Post-Gulf War Era," *Strategic Review*, Winter 1997, vol. XXV, no. 1, p. 17.

[58] Thomas A. Keaney and Eliot A. Cohen, *Gulf War Air Power Survey Summary Report* (Washington, D.C., 1993), p. 249.

[59] Jacob Weisberg, "Zero Tolerance," *New York*, October 10, 1994, vol. 27, no. 40, p. 21. Proponents of President Bush's decision further point to having all politico-military objectives attained, or to maintaining a balance of power in the Middle East with Iran as additional justification to end the war. Others argue that the coalition would have disintegrated had military efforts continued too far beyond the goal of liberating Kuwait. Justifiably, all of these reasons could have played a role in President Bush's decision to end the war. Regardless, the fear of additional U.S. casualties was undoubtedly a major factor in Bush's ultimate decision. For a more complete analysis of the war's termination, see General H. Norman Schwarzkopf's memoirs, *It Doesn't Take a Hero;* and Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor's *The General's War*.

[60] As quoted in Weisberg, p. 21. Ironically, Mueller's own studies do not fully support this assertion.

[61] Harvey M. Sapolsky and Jeremy Shapiro, "Casualties, Technology, and America's Future Wars," *Parameters*, Summer 1996), p. 121.

[62] General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, USA, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, written with Peter Petre (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), p. 544.

[63] In summoning the nation to war, President Bush had described Saddam Hussein as "worse than Hitler" and painted the conflict as a Manichaean struggle between "good and evil." Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *The General's War* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), p. 477.

[64] The RAND Corporation, RAND Research Brief, "The Effects of War Casualties on U.S. Public Opinion," (Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, 1994), p. 2.

[65] Weisberg, p. 21.

[66] This principle is governed by *jus in bello* -- the moral claims that apply during the actual conduct of a war.

[67] Alan Geyer and Barbara G. Green, *Lines in the Sand: Justice and the Gulf War* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminister/John Knox Press, 1992), p. 136.

[68] Ibid., p. 137.

[69] Michael Walzer, "Justice and Injustice in the Gulf War," *But Was It Just?* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), p. 12. Targets of opportunity were permitted in designated and specified battle zones.

[70] Department of the Air Force, *Reaching Globally, Reaching Powerfully; The United States Air Force in the Gulf War*, September 1991, p. 24.

[71] C.B. Shotwell, "Economy and Humanity in the Use of Force: A Look at the Aerial Rules of Engagement in the 1991 Gulf War," *USAF Journal of Legal Studies*, 1993, vol. 4, p. 26. Taken from a January 1992 interview with Commander Pat Walsh, USN.

[72] Shotwell, p. 43.

Notes

[73] This sets early airpower theories tumbling. Airpower theorists, such as Douhet, "reasoned" that governments would view protecting citizens as vital and fear even the threat of an air attack. Now, in the context of Saddam's tactics, they (the government) want it.

[74] Air Force Pamphlet (AFP) 110-31, International Law – The Conduct of Armed Conflict and Air Operations, paragraph 5-3a(2) & b(2).

[75] For a more complete analysis of the "justness" of the Gulf War, refer to Geyer and Green's *Lines in the Sand*, Elshtain's *But Was It Just?*, and Shotwell's *Economy and Humanity in the Use of Force: A Look at the Aerial Rules of Engagement in the 1991 Gulf War*.

[76] Shotwell, p. 33.

[77] It was reported that the center was used for communication with senior leadership in the Kuwait theater of operations. Quoting Secretary Cheney, "Saddam might now be resorting to a practice of deliberately placing civilians in harm's way." Shotwell, p. 33.

[78] Shotwell, p. 23; interview with "Blackhole" planning staff 27 Nov 92. The "Blackhole" was the center for allied air operations and planning during the war and where the Air Tasking Orders (ATO) and force packages were prepared.

[79] Thomas A. Keaney and Eliot A. Cohen, *Revolution in Warfare? Air Power in the Persian Gulf* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press), p. 58. After the attack, Iraqis reported the lower floors of the bunker to be (conveniently) flooded, so as to prevent journalists from inspecting that portion of the facility.

[80] Lt Col David Deptula, GWAPS interviews, 20 and 21 December 1991. As cited in Keaney and Cohen, Deptula's personal notes from the war confirm that on 13 February 1991 General Glosson was instructed by General Schwarzkopf to begin showing him all targets selected for attack in downtown Baghdad before they were struck.

[81] John E. Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 122.

[82] Keaney and Cohen, p. 99.

[83] Schwarzkopf, p. 542.

[84] As described by General Michael Dugan, USAF (Ret.), Maxwell AFB, AL, 21 Nov 96.

[85] Retired General Michael Dugan interview, Maxwell AFB, Al, 21 Nov 96. Note: The reader must draw his/her own conclusions regarding General Dugan's remarks since they were made *after* his dismissal as Air Force Chief of Staff, and may reflect a personal animosity towards certain members associated with the Bush administration.

[86] Mueller, p. 122.

[87] Schwarzkopf, p. 468.

[88] Mueller, p. 123.

[89] John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy,* History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Military Series, Vol. 6 (London: HMSO, 1956), p. 161.

[90] Steven L. Arnold, MIT Defense and Arms Control Study Program (DACS) Special Seminar, 24 May 1993, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[91] Shotwell, p. 38.

Notes

[92] Greenpeace reports would seem to indicate that this was the circumstance during the desperate Iraqi withdrawal. However, this was certainly not the case. Tanks, armored personnel carriers (APCs), and other military vehicles were embedded within the retreating convoys. The situation bore close resemblance to the Falaise Gap in August 1944 when Allied forces hammered away at fleeing Germans in much the same fashion.

[93] Thomas B. Allen, R. Clifton Berry, and Norman Polmar, *CNN War in the Gulf* (Atlanta: Turner Publishing, Inc., 1991), p. 214.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Colonel John A. Warden, III, USAF, "Employing Air Power in the Twenty-first Century," in Richard H. Schultz and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, eds. *The Future of Air Power in the Aftermath of the Gulf War* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1992), pp. 61-62.

Chapter 5

Debacle in the Streets: Somalia

None of the political leadership can tell me what they want me to accomplish. That

fact, however, does not stop them from continually asking me when I will be done.

— An Anonymous U.N. Commander

While the United States enjoys its hegemonic role as the world's only superpower, a

majority of Americans want to stop carrying a disproportionate share of the burden

maintaining world security.[96] On the other hand, some Americans feel the U.S. has a

moral obligation that falls upon any single superpower to assume the role as "the world's

policeman." These citizens argue for U.S. intervention whenever developing societies

require our assistance. In an April 1995 poll, 66 percent of those surveyed agreed with

the argument that "when innocent civilians are suffering or are being killed," the U.S.

should be willing to contribute troops to a United Nations (U.N.) peacekeeping operation,

"whether or not it serves the national interest."[97] Additionally, 67 percent agreed that

"the United States has a moral responsibility toward poor nations to help them develop

economically and improve their people's lives."[98] Similar public pressure prompted U.S.

operations in Somalia beginning 15 August 1992.

The mission in Somalia promised great humanitarian benefits and high prospects for

success at little or no cost in U.S. lives, and benefited from bipartisan congressional

support. Although few Americans perceived a vital interest in Somalia, three out of four initially supported the humanitarian operation. Furthermore, most supporters were convinced that by saving hundreds of thousands of Somali lives, the U.S. would be averting a major regional disaster.[99] In fact, until the disintegration of the security situation in the early fall of 1993, the operation generally lived up to the public's expectations, and bipartisan support (or permission) held.

America's Response

OPERATION	DATES	UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION
Provide Relief (UNOSOM I)	15 Aug 92—9 Dec 92	UNSCR # 751/ 24 Apr 1992
Restore Hope (UNITAF)	9 Dec 92—4 May 93	UNSCR # 794/ 3 Dec 1992
USFORSOM (UNOSOM II)	4 May 93—31 Mar 94	UNSCR # 814/ 26 Mar 1993

Figure 1. Phases of U.S. Operations in Somalia

The collapse of Somalia's central government and the rise of tribal and clan warfare quickly degraded Somali society. Reports of impending disaster in Somalia by Under Secretary-General James Jonah, the senior U.N. official charged with Somalia policy, prompted Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali to conclude that the U.N.'s political role in Somali could no longer be handled exclusively from New York. In April 1992, the U.N. Security Council approved Resolution 751, establishing the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) whose mission was to provide humanitarian aid and facilitate the end of clan-based hostilities.[100] Unfortunately, the fifty UNOSOM observers did not make a noticeable difference in either ending hostilities or securing relief supplies. Over the summer the humanitarian crisis deepened. A July 22 report by the U.N. secretary-

general expressed stark pessimism, describing a critical food situation, widespread famine in the rural areas, and estimates that a million Somali children were at immediate risk from malnutrition. The pastoral economy central to Somalia's culture was in ruin, with drought and disease killing as much as forty percent of the cattle. In addition, clan warfare prevented farmers from working in the most productive rain-fed fields and irrigated agricultural areas.[101]

As public distress about the situation in Somalia mounted, pressure on the Bush administration to act came from three main sources — the media, Congress, and the humanitarian relief agencies operation in Somalia. Television news beamed graphic images of looting, banditry, and heart-wrenching depictions of women and children in the throes of war-induced starvation and death. The East African correspondents of *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* continually updated the American public on the starvation and clan warfare in Somalia. A parade of editorial commentators challenged the administration and Congress to act before total catastrophe ensued.[102]

As one would expect, the state of Somalia also became an issue in the presidential campaign as supporters of Democratic candidate Bill Clinton criticized President George Bush for inaction and feeble support for the United Nations. Succumbing to these pressures, President George Bush finally responded by ordering U.S. forces to support Operation PROVIDE RELIEF from 15 August 1992 through 9 December 1992. Organized by CENTCOM (U.S. Central Command), the mission of this operation was to "provide military assistance in support of emergency humanitarian relief to Somalia [and Kenya]."[103] Unfortunately, the mission's objectives were quite limited:[104]

- Deploy a Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team (HAST) to assess relief requirements

- Activate a Joint Task Force to conduct an emergency airlift of food and supplies
- Deploy four C-141 and eight C-130 aircraft to provide daily relief sorties during daylight hours to locations which provide a permissive and safe environment

Despite the reinforcement provided by Operation PROVIDE RELIEF, the security situation grew worse. In November, a ship laden with relief supplies was fired upon in Mogadishu harbor, forcing its immediate withdrawal. Furthermore, the few supplies that did make it into Somalia were usually confiscated by warring clan factions. As public distress grew in the United States, U.S. interagency debate on Somalia policy continued without reaching a consensus. At the State Department both the African and the Human Rights Bureaus argued for greater U.S. involvement. The National Security Council (NSC) staff provided various "ideas" — from backing an "all necessary measures" resolution that would allow the use of force against those who blocked relief efforts, to mounting a military rescue operation similar to Operation PROVIDE COMFORT (undertaken to assist the Kurds in northern Iraq after the Gulf War).[105] The Defense Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, while concerned, regarded both the State and NSC positions as "nebulous," vaguely asking the military to "fix the civil war" in Somalia.[106]

Finally, President Bush's December 4 announcement of Operation RESTORE HOPE broke the logjam. Under the terms of U.N. Resolution 794, the United States both led and provided forces to a multinational coalition later called the United Task Force (UNITAF). UNITAF would attempt to stabilize the situation until a permanent U.N. peacekeeping force could be formed. The U.N. mandate implied two important missions: to provide humanitarian assistance to the Somali people, and to restore order in southern Somalia.[107]

With tighter security, the intense relief effort staved off the immediate threat of starvation in many areas.[108]   However, plans for the termination of UNITAF and an orderly hand-off to the U.N.-led peacekeeping force (christened UNOSOM II) were repeatedly delayed. During this period, U.S. forces continued to disarm Somali bandits and rival clan factions that operated throughout Somalia. Finally, after frustrating delays, Security Council Resolution 814 officially established UNOSOM II on 26 March 1993.[109] The mission of the 4,500 Americans supporting the new U.N. resolution was to "conduct military operations to consolidate, expand, and maintain a secure environment for the advancement of humanitarian aid, economic assistance, and political reconciliation in Somalia."[110]

The Creep Begins

UNOSOM II and its growing international contingent ultimately threatened the Mogadishu power base of one Somali warlord, Mohammed Farah Aideed.[111] It was virtually inevitable that a test of strength between Aideed and the U.N. forces would occur early on. Not only did Aideed hold Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali personally responsible for many of Somalia's current misfortunes, but the U.N.'s presence threatened Aideed's growing hold of southern Somalia. The crisis erupted into full view on 5 June 1993, when 24 Pakistani soldiers were slain in an ambush by Aideed supporters.[112]In the aftermath of the ambush, the United States played a prominent role in drafting U.N. Security Council Resolution 837, which called for the apprehension of those parties responsible. As Kenneth Allard wrote, "[t]hat resolution constituted another de facto change in the mission, because its terms were rapidly translated into a manhunt for [General] Aideed."[113] Ultimately, this manhunt reached a climax on 3 October 1993,

when U.S. rangers launched an attempt to capture the elusive general. In a surprise helicopter raid on the Olympia Hotel in central Mogadishu, the rangers captured twenty-four Somali National Alliance (SNA) suspects, including several of Aideed's key aides.[114]

Unfortunately, as the rangers were evacuating the prisoners, SNA militia, using rifle grenades and automatic weapons, shot down two U.S. helicopters. In the subsequent rescue effort, the rangers and Delta Force found themselves pinned down in a heavy fire-fight. In the end, sixteen U.S. soldiers had been killed and 78 more wounded, with Somali casualties estimated at 400 dead and another 500 wounded.[115] This fire-fight had quickly become one of the costliest battles of any U.N. peacekeeping operation.

Policy Evaluation

The deaths of U.S. servicemen in the fight in Mogadishu on 3-4 October 1993, shocked the American body politic, and resulted in dramatic increases in both congressional debates and media reporting.[116] Many commentators consider the single image of Somali mobs dragging the lifeless body of an American helicopter pilot through the streets of Mogadishu as the immediate cause of the Clinton Administration's announcement to withdraw U.S. forces from Somalia.[117] Those who share this view conveniently divorce the cost of the operation from its context. Certainly, past U.S. experiences in Beirut, Lebanon, bore great similarity to the situation in Somalia. The terrorist bombing and deaths of 241 Marines in a country where the U.S. was supposedly trying to promote peace forced a change in U.S. policy. As in Lebanon, following the collapse of the situation in Somalia, the administration was unable to clearly articulate the purpose of U.S. forces remaining in country. The perceived aversion to loss of U.S. lives

had less to do with a decline in the public's willingness to accept casualties than the debatable (and debated) merits of the cases themselves.

Pundits, such as Charles Moskos and Jacob Weisberg, have categorized the deepening involvement of U.S. forces during UNOSOM II as "mission creep," despite the fact that these changes in both mission and direction clearly resulted from decisions by the national command authorities. Ironically, critics' condemnation of the mission were heard only after the fiasco. Foreign policy experts, such as former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, harshly attacked President Bill Clinton's quick shift in his Somalia policy following the American deaths. Kissinger believed President Clinton's subsequent willingness to negotiate, rather than continue efforts to capture Aideed, sent the wrong signals. "The world's other mischief-makers will have no fear," Kissinger warned, "unless the U.S. reduces Aideed's 'power base so that it's apparent that when you attack the U.S. in the brutal way in which it has been done,' there is a price to pay."[118]

To most members of the public, the American stakes in Somalia no longer justified maintaining or increasing the commitment. In fact, the public's clear preference was for an orderly (but not immediate) withdrawal.[119] Nevertheless, although withdrawal from Somalia was consistently the preferred option, majorities refused to accept withdrawal until U.S. servicemen being held hostage had been returned safely.[120] Complementing the majority's unwillingness to withdraw until the Somalis returned captured U.S. servicemen, the public supported the use of force if negotiations failed to lead to their release.[121] This interpretation is consistent with results of a 5 October 1993 Gallup poll, that show that 63 percent of those who wanted to withdraw immediately also supported

"capturing and punishing Aideed," as did 71 percent of those who wanted to withdraw gradually.[122] This evidence reinforces earlier conclusions drawn in chapter two: the American public is highly tolerant of casualties when the interests are deemed vital. The American public certainly regards the release of U.S. hostages as vital.

Bitter Lessons

U.S. policy-makers and military leaders failed to convey the reasons for shifting U.S. goals and missions in Somalia, or the possible consequences of its changing relations with the U.N. and Somali warlords. Washington provided insufficient warnings to foreshadow the growing Somali hostility to the U.N., or the buildup to events of this magnitude. Media stories failed to link the complexities of U.S.-U.N. disagreements, Somali warlord politics, tensions between military peacekeepers and non-governmental aid organizations, and shifting U.S. missions. The administration offered no credible rationale for the classified ranger mission that resulted in the fire-fight, offered no public eulogies to redeem their losses, and failed to link the hunt for Aideed to larger relief and stability operations. Ironically, the week *following* the deaths of the American rangers, President Clinton stated, "[w]e have no interest in denying anybody access to playing a role in Somalia's political future."[123] If this was truly the case, then why did President Clinton order the ranger operation to abduct Aideed in the first place? Surely Aideed's position as a top Somali clan leader would imply that he would play a significant role in Somalia's future. In short, the administration failed to create a base of public opinion to support what happened. Washington also failed to explain *why* it changed its policy. As Frank Stech summarized, "the horror and seeming pointlessness of the rangers' deaths challenged the U.S. Somali presence in the public's mind."[124]

General John M. Shalikashvili has since referred to the "bitter lesson" of Somalia. Indeed, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs speculated that there is now a "Somalia syndrome," making it extremely difficult for U.S. peacekeepers to suffer any casualties without jeopardizing public support for the operation. If true, this underscores the need for few, if any, casualties as a condition of any future use of force (at least in low intensity conflicts). Once again, however, evidence regarding public opinion and consensus contradicts the requirement for few casualties as a precursor to commitment. It is not a mandate for few losses that is needed; but, instead, a coherent expression of goals in pursuit of foreign policy.

The abrupt American withdrawal from Somalia offered future adversaries an alternative study in U.S. resolve. Futurist Chuck de Caro offered a media-oriented perspective — the Somalia crisis enables other "mischief-makers" to create worldwide propaganda images for their own benefits: "a tenth rate tin-pot Haitian dictator using global TV as a C^3I mechanism judges the likely reaction of the U.S. in the wake of the video of rangers being killed and mutilated in Somalia."[125] In response, the United States must ensure that the correct lessons are learned. U.S. political and military leaders must combat those adversaries who have misinterpreted U.S. resolve by first establishing a solid base of public consensus. This can be accomplished primarily by being forthright in selling the public on the merits of impending military interventions. Finally, the United States must find a way to eradicate America's perceived intolerance for U.S. casualties. Ultimately, America will find this task more difficult to conquer.

Notes
[96] Steven Kull, "What the Public Knows that Washington Doesn't," *Foreign Policy*, no. 101 (Winter, 1995-1996), p. 108.

Notes

[97] PIPA poll, January, 1995. Cited in Kull, p. 113.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Eric Larson, *Casualties and Consensus: The Historical Role of Casualties in Domestic Support for U.S. Military Operations* (Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, 1996), p. 43. Larson points out that CCFR surveys have found that combating world hunger is typically viewed as a very important foreign policy goal by majorities of those polled: 63 percent in 1986 and 56 percent in 1994.

[100] John L. Hirsch and Robert B. Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope* (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1995), p. 21.

[101] Hirsch and Oakley, p. 23.

[102] Ibid., p. 35.

[103] Kenneth Allard, *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned* (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1995), p. 14.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Hirsch and Oakley, p. 39.

[106] Ibid., p. 37.

[107] Allard, p. 16. Because of southern Somalia's agricultural and pastoral base, population density, and port facilities, most Somali clans claimed refuge and rights in and around Mogadishu (and neighboring villages).

[108] One must understand that starvation in Somalia was, in fact, more "man-made" than "natural", as warring clans used food as a weapon to suppress and coerce the local populace.

[109] This mandate was the first ever U.N. directed peacekeeping operation under the Chapter VVII enforcement provisions of the Charter, including the requirement for UNOSOM II to disarm the Somali clans. (Allard, p. 18).

[110] Allard, p. 19.

[111] Aideed was very suspicious and vociferous in his criticism of the U.N., in part because of genuinely strong nationalist feelings, in part because he feared it would hinder his plans to obtain power by whatever means necessary, and in part because he had a strong personal animosity toward Boutros-Ghali, whom he considered responsible for Egypt's strong support of Siad Barre while he was minister of state for foreign affairs. These negative feelings were reciprocated by the secretary-general. These powerful animosities played an important role in the difficulties of the U.N. in Somalia over the next two years.

[112] Allard, p. 20.

[113] Ibid., p. 31.

[114] Hirsch and Oakley, p. 127.

[115] Hirsch and Oakley report that 18 soldiers were killed during the battle instead of 16 (other figures coincide with their accounts), p. 127.

[116] Larson, p. 68.

[117] Chapters 2 and 3 of this study explore this assumption in great detail, concluding that a failed policy resulted in the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Somalia, rather than the October debacle in which 16 Rangers and special forces personnel were slain in Mogadishu.

Notes

[118] Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, quoted in Frank J. Stech's "Winning CNN Wars," *Parameters*, Fall 1994, p. 42.

[119] Of the 30 or so polls on Somalia that offered a withdrawal option after the October fire-fight in Mogadishu, only one poll -- that done by ABC News on October 7, 1993 -- did there seem to be *majority* sentiment for an immediate withdrawal. Larson, p. 69.

[120] See CBS News, October 6 and 7, 1993; NBC News, October 6, 1993; *Time*/CNN, October 7, 1993; and Gallup, October 8, 1993. Larson, p. 69.

[121] See ABC News, October 5, 1993. Larson, p. 70.

[122] Larson, p. 70 (Supra note 47).

[123] Stech, p. 42.

[124] Ibid., p. 43.

[125] Chuck de Caro, "Sats. Lies, and Video-Rape," as quoted in Stech, p. 43. Remarkably, de Caro's view had sharp connectivity with subsequent embarrassments in Haiti. Members of Haiti's junta believed that the Clinton Administration's reaction to Somalia showed that it lacked the "stomach" and fortitude to fight. Predicting such behavior, a mob of thugs turned back the USS *Harlan County* before it disembarked a body of lightly armed U.S. and Canadian engineers. One Haitian official remarked, "we thought we had a fifty-fifty chance that he'd run away, which is what he's done." Jill Smolowe, "With Friends Like These," *Time*, September 19, 1994; Michael Kramer, "The Case Against Invading Haiti," *Time*, September 19, 1994; and Mark J. Conversino, "Sawdust Superpower: Perceptions of U.S. Casualty Intolerance," *Strategic Review*, vol. XXV, Winter 1997, p. 19-20.

Chapter 6

Paradigm Reversal: U.S. Operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina

A big butcher's bill is not necessarily evidence of good tactics.

— Sir A. P. Wavell

Recent United States involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina represents a new benchmark in politico-military sensitivity toward casualties. U.S. policy in Bosnia transited the entire risk continuum — from categorizing the loss of a single airman as a "political crisis," to the diametrically opposed policy of jeopardizing airmen at the expense of preventing collateral deaths. Furthermore, American military leadership in Bosnia-Herzegovina turned a political paradigm completely on its head. Whereby U.S. politicians often advocate a model that routinely constrains military operations, the military's self-imposed circumscription in Bosnia-Herzegovina restricted U.S. military options and tightened corresponding rules of engagement (ROE). This chapter examines American peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia, and seeks to derive its implications for future U.S. armed forces intervention. Setting the Stage for Hostilities[126]

The end of the Cold War set the stage for the break-up of Yugoslavia. The explosive disintegration of the country seemed an inescapable result of ancient hatred among the country's constituent ethnic groups. The 1980 death of Yugoslav Communist Party leader, Josip Broz, known by the pseudonym Tito, opened the floodgates of inter-ethnic

animosity. As revolutionary factions strengthened, ethnic and religious pride and hatred were eagerly kindled by leaders who recognized their potential power.[127]

As one would expect, the inter-ethnic violence increased for over a decade until, finally, the European Community (EC) decided to officially recognize Slovenia and Croatia as independent republics in January 1992. Furthermore, the EC established a panel to consider applications for recognition from other aspiring Yugoslav republics. Ironically, the U.S. did not initially join the Europeans in recognizing Croatia or Slovenia, seeing their secession as destabilizing. However, America's forlorn hope for Yugoslav harmony finally gave way to U.S. recognition of the republics, to include Bosnia-Herzegovina.[128]

Unfortunately, formal recognition did not stop the in fighting, especially in ethnically diverse Bosnia-Herzegovina. Enjoying the advantage of possessing ex-JNA (Yugoslav National Army) military equipment, the Bosnian Serbs made initial gains against the newly formed Bosnian Army (BiH). Following successful BiH counterattacks, a three-year stalemate offered an opportunity for U.N. intervention under the guise of UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Forces) in spring 1993.[129] On 12 April 1993, UNSCR 816 granted NATO authority to establish a no-fly zone over Bosnia, and its mandate was later expanded to include providing close air support (CAS) as necessary to protect U.N. peacekeepers.[130] Codenamed Operation DENY FLIGHT, this NATO operation marked an increasingly active role in the Bosnian crisis for the U.S.

A Question of Vital Interests

U.S. political and military sensitivity to casualties reached a pinnacle during the Balkans involvement. This may be was due to Washington's difficulty in describing

which vital interests were at stake in the former Yugoslavia. Even Secretary of State Warren Christopher's synopsis of U.S. interests in Bosnia left the American public yearning for a more concrete explanation:

Our primary reason for joining with our NATO partners to implement a Bosnia peace plan is compelling: to end the worst conflict in Europe since the Second World War. Left unchecked, fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina has the potential to spread beyond its current confines, threatening our vital European interests and the security of our closest NATO allies.[131]

Secretary Christopher's statement dismisses the crux of public skepticism: *which* vital interests are being threatened to justify U.S. armed forces involvement in Bosnia. A corresponding Gallup poll echoed that public concern:

Do you approve or disapprove of the presence of U.S. troops in Bosnia?
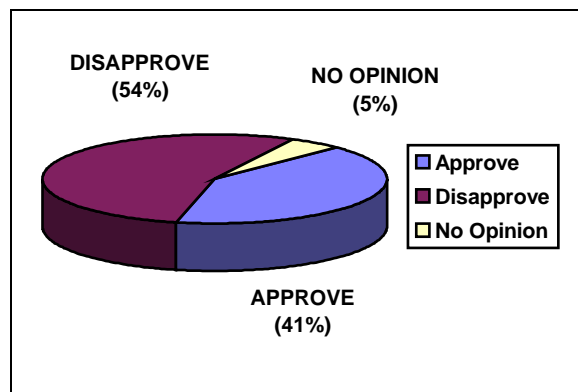
Source: Gallup Poll, *Gallup Poll Monthly,* December 1995.

Figure 2

The administration's inability to identify the American interests in Bosnia-Herzegovina sparked controversy among the public and politicians alike. As figure 2 indicates, when asked directly about their approval or disapproval of the presence of U.S. troops in Bosnia, 54 percent of Americans disapproved while 41 percent approved.[132]

Such data would seem to indicate that the American public at large did not understand the connection between the Bosnian crisis and U.S. vital interests at stake. Regardless, it is critical that an administration clearly justifies the rationale for U.S. intervention.[133] In 1993, the absence of similar delineation prompted critics such as *Newsweek* columnist Joe Klein to debate America's interests in Bosnia-Herzegovina: "there is in the Balkans no rationale worth risking the life of a single American soldier."[134] Similar analogies and lines of questions ensued during 1995 congressional testimony. "[L]et me just say that I feel very uneasy about this," opined Congressman Toby Roth (Wisconsin). "I have not heard a single Congressman . . . or single person back in my district [say] let's get in; quite the contrary. They have all said let's be careful, let's not go in."[135] Representative William Goodling was more hard-lined: "the conflict in Bosnia, with all its human suffering and tragedy, is not worth the death of a single American."[136] Consequently, this political-public disconnect with the administration plagued U.S. decision-makers throughout the Balkans intervention.

Self-Circumscription

On 2 June 1995, Bosnian Serbs shot down a United States Air Force (USAF) F-16 flown by Captain Scott O'Grady with an SA-6 *Kub* SAM (surface-to-air missile) near Banja Luka in western Bosnia. The F-16 shootdown shocked U.S. politicians and the public, forcing suppressed anxieties to the forefront of the debate over Bosnia. While U.S. allies argued for continued DENY FLIGHT patrols over Bosnia, Armed Forces South (AFSOUTH) commanders maintained that the risks involved in further overflights were not commensurate with the gains.[137] Arguably, the ends-means calculus seemed at odds with the transparency of U.S. interests regarding Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Various press reports dubbed the O'Grady shootdown a "crisis" — even in light of U.S. Secretary of Defense William J. Perry's estimate of inevitable U.S. casualties.[138] In the face of public ambivalence and vocal political opposition, the potential loss of a *single* airman became a "crisis" for the Clinton administration.[139] Conceivably, previous inferences drawn from the U.S.' debacle in Somalia — underscoring the need for few, *if any*, casualties as a condition of any future use of force — was accepted by the administration. The American public, however, did not share this conviction. As Table 11 illustrates, the public certainly anticipated U.S. casualties in Bosnia.

Regarding the situation in Bosnia, how confident are you that the U.S. will be able to accomplish its goals with very few or no American casualties?

Table 11

	Very Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not too Confident	Not at all Confident	No Opinion
Few or No Casualties	12%	28%	29%	28%	3%

Source: Gallup Poll, *Gallup Poll Monthly*, December 1995, p. 32.

The U.S. political response to the O'Grady mishap is certainly a matter for future concern. The euphoria and media hype surrounding O'Grady's rescue, not to mention Washington's self-proclaimed "victory," assured future adversaries of our ineptness in accepting military losses. As Maj Mark Conversino chided, "[t]he notion that the loss of a single fighting man could have created a foreign policy crisis for the President adds weight to Luttwak's contention that a true 'great power' is willing to risk combat and accept its resultant losses even in areas of 'less-than-vital' interest."[140] One may question whether the extent of skittishness over the possible loss of a single airman has limited the U.S.' ability to be the world's hegemonic leader.

Preempting Collateral Casualties

As hostilities continued, political and military hypersensitivity to casualties *of any sort* grew. Given NATO's claim of impartiality, collateral Bosnian Serb casualties resulting from NATO attacks could have reshaped the political, normative, and emotional nature of the Balkan campaign. Televised images of dead Bosnian Serb soldiers, shelled towns, and lines of refugees could have reshuffled every participant's view of the conflict, and likely would have degraded political will.

NATO air strikes against Udbina airfield on 21 November 1994 exemplified the tensions between the U.N. and NATO over the prospects of limiting Bosnian Serb fatalities. Both supranational alliances agreed that the strikes were necessary as punishment for and to curb future Bosnian Serb air attacks on Bosnian government forces. Anticipating an active Serbian defense, U.S. Lieutenant General Michael Ryan (AIRSOUTH Commander) requested a complete "takedown" of the airfield to include strikes against the offending aircraft themselves, the runway and taxiways, and air defense systems in the area. However, as casualty limitations were in the forefront of all decision-making, U.N. Special Ambassador Yosushi Akashi approved attacks against Udbina's runways and taxiways, but *not* against the offending aircraft or air defense systems. But, viewing these restrictions as rendering the proposed air strikes ineffective while increasing the risk to American pilots, U.S. Admiral Leighton Smith (Commander-in-Chief, AFSOUTH) and General Ryan finally persuaded Ambassador Akashi to approve counterattacks against active air defense systems. Aircraft sitting on the apron of Udbina, however, remained off limits to NATO bombs. Consequently, and to the

irritation of NATO air commanders and U.S. diplomats, the Udbina strike was ineffectual — leaving Serbian air forces intact.[141]

The Bosnian Serbs again tested America's resolve the following summer. In response to renewed shelling of safe areas, the U.N. requested punitive air strikes against the Bosnia Serbs. On 25 and 26 May 1995, NATO aircraft attacked ammunition storage sites in Pale, the Bosnian Serb capital. The Serbs responded as they had to previous air strikes, by taking 370 U.N. peacekeepers hostage, and placed many of them at strategic locations as human shields to deter further NATO air strikes.[142] As one might expect, NATO bombing ceased — reflecting the U.S.' steadfast avoidance of civilian casualties by guaranteeing the safety of U.N. hostages from NATO bombs. Even within the context of collateral damage, casualties were intolerable.

United States efforts to limit civilian casualties in Bosnia reflected a policy that certainly overrode military objectives. CINCSOUTH OPLAN 40101(Operation DENY FLIGHT) admonished NATO airmen to ensure that strikes against offending forces were "proportional" — avoiding unnecessary casualties and collateral damage.[143] In practice, however, "avoiding unnecessary casualties" meant "avoiding *any* casualties."

Following the mortar shelling of a Sarajevo marketplace by the Bosnian-Serb Army, the U.S. quickly transitioned to Operation DELIBERATE FORCE — retaliatory air strikes against selected Bosnian-Serb targets. Perceived diplomatic sensibilities constrained Lt Gen Ryan to ensure that planning efforts and operations did not undermine the U.N.'s prevalent confidence in NATO's capability. Consequently, the planning restrictions for Operation DELIBERATE FORCE became a limiting factor in developing potential courses of action by the planning staff. Key amongst these was the method by

which Lt Gen Ryan personally selected and approved all targets and their associated DMPIs (desired mean point of impact), and the requirement to avoid collateral damage. This zero-tolerance for collateral damage represented Lt Gen Ryan's deepest conviction that collateral deaths would bring an end to NATO's air effort.

Cognizant of the implications from such incidents as the Al Firdos tragedy during the Gulf War and the aforementioned U.S. congressional debates, Lt Gen Ryan considered himself *the* campaign planner and would not delegate the target approval process for fear of possible political consequences: "If we had committed one atrocity from the air, NATO would forever be blamed for crimes."[144] The implication from Lt Gen Ryan's inference cannot be overemphasized. Inadvertent collateral damage was no longer a fortune of war, but an *atrocity*! Apparently, Lt Gen Ryan had refined Secretary of Defense William Perry's argument that Bosnia "will not be without cost and will not be without risk."[145] Lt Gen Ryan felt strongly that any delegation of targeting authority must be specific to an individual who will be held accountable. Nonetheless, such delegation was not forthcoming.

Accordingly, this conviction led Gen Ryan to place specific restraints on how weapons were delivered, on aircraft approach patterns, the number of passes permitted, and the number of weapons released on a single pass.[146] Gen Ryan's main concern was ensuring that weapons and tactics used by NATO pilots would accomplish the desired level of destruction, while avoiding unplanned damage to civilian people and property. Furthermore, General Ryan reviewed satellite and aerial photography during his targeting approval to ensure that no standing structures had visible air conditioning units, which could suggest that the building was inhabited during daylight hours. Since caution

governed or overrode military necessity, these structures were targeted only at night (if targeted at all).[147]   As one can imagine, theater airmen and planners bitterly second-guessed these restrictions.

Political solicitude enveloped Operation DELIBERATE FORCE as it remained an offshoot of the U.N. peacekeeping mandate. General Ryan and Admiral Smith agreed that the diplomatic sensitivities of the campaign made collateral damage an issue of pivotal strategic importance. Every bomb was a "political" bomb, Ryan believed. He feared that a single stray bomb causing civilian casualties would take the interventionists off the moral high ground, marshal world opinion against the air campaign, and probably bring it to a halt before it had its intended effects.[148]Perhaps as a natural consequence of the lack of direct discussions between U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke and Lt Gen Ryan, each held somewhat different views of the political and diplomatic connections of the air campaign.   In contrast to Gen Ryan's beliefs, Ambassador Holbrooke believed that political and popular support for the campaign were not nearly so sensitive to collateral damage as the military commanders thought.[149] Indeed, as Table 12 suggests, the U.S. public showed minimal concern for Bosnian civilians.

> In your view, does the United States have a moral obligation to protect the citizens of Bosnia against Serbian attacks, or don't you feel this way?

Table 12

Yes, moral obligation	No, don't think so	No opinion
29%	63%	8%

Source: Gallup Poll, *The Gallup Poll Monthly*, June 1995, p. 17.

Such contradictions highlight JCS Chairman General John Shalikashvili's warning to the Senate Armed Services Committee that we may have set a standard too high to meet

consistently. General Shalikashvili reaffirmed our desire to minimize friendly and civilian losses, but cautioned that neither troops nor the public should be led to believe that military operations are "routinely free of casualties and collateral damage."[150] In light of such contradicting absolute wisdom, one may question Lt Gen Ryan's centralized methods and heightened sensitivity towards casualties.

Conclusion

As discussed in previous chapters, perhaps the stunning successes of recent conflicts have raised the expectations of nearly bloodless victories. The "zero-tolerance" attitude toward American losses in Bosnia seems to represent a political inability to accept risk. Can an overt stress on casualty limitation cause an army's leaders to become too timid, and the soldiers to lose their "warrior spirit"?[151] The ancient Chinese strategist and commander Wu Zi wrote, "[i]n general, on the battlefield, if soldiers are committed to fight to the death they will live, whereas if they seek to stay alive, they will die . . . . Thus it can be said that the greatest harm that can befall the army's employment [stems from] hesitation, while the disasters that strike . . . are born in doubt."[152]

A matter still in dispute is whether there can be an "arm's length" war — a use of force that keeps all but a few pilots out of harm's way. Many civilian commentators have joined airpower advocates in endorsing air strikes as a highly effective but low-risk option even for ethnic conflicts and civil wars. True, much can be done by airpower, with few lives at risk, especially if one can resist the temptation to use airpower alone. As IFOR (the U.N.'s follow-on peace "implementation force" in Bosnia) reminds us, the typical great power business of restoring order still requires ground forces,[153] even in the

face of majority opposition. In the end, the infantry is still indispensable, although now mostly withheld by the fear of casualties.

Finally, the most obvious implication drawn from U.S. efforts in Bosnia is the degree to which the military has restricted its own operations. The restrictions placed on targeting in DELIBERATE FORCE, in many ways, reminds one of the circumscription on targeting in Southeast Asia. However, as opposed to the political limitations placed on military operations in Vietnam, in this case it was the military's own self-restraint which limited operations. We may be witnessing a paradigm reversal in the relationship between political and military influences in rules of engagement (ROE). Quite possibly, the years of inculcation in the law of armed conflict has prompted this internalization of extreme restraint by military leadership.

Notes

[126126] This introduction is merely a slice of the history surrounding the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. For the reader who seeks a more complete understanding of these complex matters, note Christopher Bennet, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse* (New York: New York University Press, 1995). Also worthy of examination are Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1995); Laura Silber and Allan Little, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation* (New York: TV Books/Penguin USA, 1996); and Lenard J. Cohen, *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition*, Second ed. (Boulder: Westview, 1995).

[127] See V. P. Gagnon, Jr., "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict," *International Security*, vol. 19, no. 3 (Winter 1994/95), pp. 130 - 166.

[128] Karl Mueller, "The Demise of Yugoslavia and the Destruction of Bosnia: Strategic Causes, Effects, and Responses," chapter 2, p. 13, of unpublished manuscript *Deliberate Force: A Case Study in Air Campaigning* (Maxwell AFB, Air University, 1996).

[129] Christopher Bennet, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), p. 184-185.

[130] Mueller, p. 18.

[131] Questions answered for the record by Secretary of State Warren Christopher for Representative William Goodling, Committee on International Relations, October 18, 1995. "U.S. Policy Towards Bosnia," Hearing before the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, October 18, 1995 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), p. 63.

Notes

[132] A follow-up question further suggests that those who disapprove were more passionate about their conviction than those who approved: 43 percent of Americans strongly disapproved, while just 24 percent strongly approved. Source: *Gallup Poll Monthly* (December 1995), p. 31.

[133] This critical link is discussed thoroughly in chapters 2, 3, and 5.

[134] Joe Klein, "Oops. Maybe We Shouldn't Have," *Newsweek*, March 15, 1993, p. 44.

[135] Testimony of the Honorable Toby Roth, "U.S. Policy Towards Bosnia," Hearing before the Committee on International Relations, October 18, 1995. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), p. 16.

[136] The Honorable William Goodling, in his Questions for the Record Submitted to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Committee on International Relations (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), p. 40.

[137] AFSOUTH commanders maintained that since relatively few airplanes were violating the no flight zone and NATO would not allow preemptive air strikes to destroy the Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) integrated air defense systems (IADS), the risks involved in further flights were not commensurate with the gains until it became clear that the F-16 shootdown was not a fluke. Source: Vice Admiral Ray interview, NATO Headquarters, 9 February 1996. Balkan Air Campaign Study.

[138] William J. Perry, Questions submitted for the record to the Department of Defense, "U.S. Policy Towards Bosnia," Hearing before the Committee on International Relations. When asked "Secretary Perry, what is your estimate of U.S. casualties . . . in Bosnia," Secretary Perry answered: "While we are doing everything we can to minimize the number of casualties I have stated to the Congress that I fully expect there to be some casualties over the course of this difficult, dangerous and complex mission. It is my job to ensure that our troops are superbly trained and well-equipped in order to minimize the risks of casualties." (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), p. 103.

[139] Maj Mark Conversino, "Sawdust Superpower: Perceptions of U.S. Casualty Tolerance," *Strategic Review*, vol. XXV, no. 1 (Winter 1997), p. 13.

[140] Ibid., p. 14.

[141] Colonel Robert C. Owen, USAF, ed., *Deliberate Force: A Case Study in Air Campaigning*, unpublished manuscript, Maxwell AFB, Air University, 1996, p. 9.

[142] Karl Mueller, "The Demise of Yugoslavia and the Destruction of Bosnia: Strategic Causes, Effects, and Responses," Chapter 2 of unpublished manuscript *Deliberate Force: A Case Study in Air Campaigning* Maxwell AFB, Air University, 1996.

[143] HQ Allied Forces Southern Europe, *CINCSOUTH OPLAN 40101 "Deny Flight,"* Change 4, 3 May 1993.

[144] Robert D. Pollock, "Roads Not Taken -- Theoretical Approaches to Operation DELIBERATE FORCE," Chapter 12 of unpublished manuscript *Deliberate Force: A Case Study in Air Campaigning*, Maxwell AFB, Air University, 1996.

[145] Opening statement of the Honorable William Perry, Secretary of Defense, before the Committee on International Relations House of Representatives, 18 October 1995.

Notes

[146] Robert D. Pollock, "Roads Not Taken -- Theoretical Approaches to Operation DELIBERATE FORCE," Chapter 12 of unpublished manuscript, *Deliberate Force: A Case Study in Air Campaigning*, Maxwell AFB, Air University, 1996.

[147] Lt Gen Michael Ryan, interview by Dr. Wayne Thompson and Major Tim Reagan, 16 October 1995.

[148] Owen, p. 19.

[149] Ibid.

[150] William Matthews, "Shali's Warning: Casualties Are Inevitable," *Air Force Times*, October 16, 1995, p. 27.

[151] General Shalikashvili addressed this grave concern during his renomination hearing. See Hearing of Senate Armed Services Committee, 21 Sep 1995 (Subject: Renomination of General Shalikashvili to serve as CJCS), transcript by Federal News Service, p. 4.

[152] Wu Zi, *Wu-tzu*, translated by Ralph D. Sawyer, in *The Seven Military Classics of China* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), p. 215.

[153] Edward N. Luttwak, "Where Are the Great Powers? At Home with the Kids," *Foreign* Affairs, July - August 1994, vol. 73, no. 4, p. 27.

Chapter 7

Preconditions for Defending Vital Interests? U.S. National Security Strategy and the Use of Force

Domestic policy can only defeat us: foreign policy can kill us.

— John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1961)

For more than two decades, American policy-makers have wrestled with setting the terms and conditions for the use of force. The past, of course, greatly influences and shapes American policy. Scarred by the American experience in Vietnam, successive U.S. presidents have tried to reassure the American public that their chosen military actions would not repeat earlier mistakes. Previous chapters have demonstrated an escalating proclivity of the United States to avoid casualties. By examining the current U.S. national security strategy, this chapter will show how this escalation has placed the United States in a compromised posture with regards to its use of force policy.

Evolution of the Clinton Doctrine

In the spring of 1984, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger drafted a major speech laying down six criteria for the use of military force. As soon as the speech was circulated for approval by the Reagan administration, heated debates ensued. In fact, all of the service chiefs, except the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John W. Vessey, Jr., were violently opposed to Weinberger's proposal. Sensing a political-

military face-off, Robert McFarlane, President Ronald Reagan's national security advisor at the time, successfully stalled the speech until after the fall presidential election.[154]

Finally, on 28 November 1984, Secretary Weinberger enunciated his six tests before the National Press Club:[155]

1. The United States should not commit combat forces overseas unless the particular
   engagement or occasion is deemed vital to our national interest;
2. The commitment should only be made with the clear intention of winning;
3. It should be carried out with clearly defined political and military objectives;
4. It must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary;
5. It should have the support of the American people and their elected representatives
   in Congress; and
6. It should be a last resort.

According to Bob Woodward, managing editor of the *Washington Post*, Weinberger felt this speech was "the most important of his tenure."[156] Undoubtedly, Secretary Weinberger crafted his position to address criticisms of the conduct of the Vietnam War, especially those from the U.S. military. Weinberger's tests ruled out the use of force except for vital national interests, which in hindsight, Vietnam did not appear to be. They also demanded reasonable assurance of domestic support in advance of committing troops, something difficult to predict or guarantee. Importantly, they established a call for clear political and military objectives, as well as an intention to win once engaged.

However, Weinberger's criteria constituted high hurdles against the use of force. In fact, Weinberger's cabinet colleague, Secretary of State George Schultz, called the criteria "[a] counsel of inaction bordering on paralysis."[157] General Colin Powell, former chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, recalled that he viewed Weinberger's rules "a practical guide," but perhaps too explicit, thus leading "potential enemies to look for loopholes."[158]

In effect, the Weinberger doctrine declared what *not to do* rather than *when* to take bold action.

Consequently, during his presidential tenure, George Bush argued against fixed rules or rigid criteria. In his *National Security Strategy of the United States*, President Bush also endorsed military action for important but less than vital interests, when such moves were the most appropriate instrument.[159] Interestingly, President Bush made no mention of the need for domestic or congressional support for military intervention. Nevertheless, members of the Bush administration considered such support vital.[160]

Clearly, the single most important influence on President Bill Clinton's policy on the use of force was General Powell. The JCS chairman's experience during the Vietnam War taught him the importance of having clear political objectives before employing military forces as well as the need for public support. Powell regarded the 1989 invasion of Panama (his first major operation as chairman) as vindication of the lessons about clear objectives and overwhelming, decisive force.[161] Such preconditions became known as the Powell doctrine: "[t]here should be no use of force . . . unless success is all but guaranteed. Force should be used decisively and its application should preferably be short."[162]

The Somalia experience would later prompt two significant modifications in the Powell approach to the use of force: a sharper realization that U.S. casualties must be kept very low, and a closer link between public support and continued operations. Charles A. Stevenson, professor of national security policy at the National War College, argued that "Mogadishu taught the downside corollary: even if support is not necessary to begin an operation, strong public and congressional opposition can force an early end

to it."[163] Furthermore, Somalia underscored the need for timelines, milestones, and a specific exit strategy whether the operation was going well or poorly.

The most complete articulation of President Clinton's approach to deciding when and how to employ U.S. forces appears in the president's latest [February 1996] *National Security Strategy Report*. The report pledges to "send American troops abroad only when *our interests and our values are sufficiently at stake*" [emphasis added],[164] and lists three categories of national interests: vital, important, and humanitarian. Unfortunately, the presidential report fails to specify our administration's definition for "U.S. values" or categorically define "sufficiently at stake."

In addition, the presidential report pledges to consider several critical questions prior to committing military force: Is there a clearly defined, reasonable chance of success? What are the potential costs — both human and financial — of the engagement? Do we have reasonable assurance of support from the American people and their elected representatives? Finally, do we have timelines and milestones that will reveal the extent of success or failure?[165] On the surface, these principles appear sound. However, there exists a slightly different consensus within the "Washington Beltway" on how and when the administration chooses to use military force: (1) "[w]hen vital interests are at stake, the nation should use whatever force may be necessary to achieve a quick, decisive victory *with low U.S. casualties*" [emphasis added]; and (2) "[w]hen important but not truly vital interests are at stake, and when the costs and risks of military action are commensurate with such interests and success is likely, limited military means may be used for limited political objectives."[166] These dispositions highlight a void in present policy on employing U.S. forces.

President Clinton has ostensibly combined politico-military *objectives* with national security *strategy* — two independent (and often competing) entities. For instance, suppose the administration determines that a "vital interest" is at stake but the political and military consensus agrees that high U.S. losses are probable. Does the mandate for low U.S. casualties suggest the government has conceded certain circumstances where the U.S. may *not* seek to secure its vital interests? Furthermore, by pledging that certain questions will be considered prior to committing military forces, has the president also set the conditions for future U.S. *inactivity* — even when vital interests are at stake? What if success cannot be guaranteed without high costs? What if popular support for a probable, or subsequent, U.S. intervention remains low? In the past, vital interests were deemed securable *by any and all means available*.[167] Now, it seems the U.S. government has set certain preconditions before securing such interests.

Conclusion

Political policy surrounding the employment of armed forces has taken a circuitous route. Criticized because of its inflexible characteristics, the Weinberger doctrine quietly yielded to the Bush, Powell, and finally the Clinton doctrine. One should note a feature of President Clinton's principles. While most are phrased positively, the underlying thrust is often negative: don't embark on operations that do not have an overwhelming chance of success; don't begin an intervention without a clear understanding of how to end it; and, don't use force incrementally or gradually.[168] A negative phrasing might highlight the true origin of many of these principles — avoiding the mistakes of Vietnam (ironically, the same origin of Weinberger's policies).

While President Clinton insists that the decision on *whether and when* to use force is dictated first and foremost by America's national interest,[169] he adds conditions for its employment. Certain conditions, such as minimizing casualties, are essential in determining strategy, but should be independent of any decision to protect U.S. vital interests. However, such questioning may undermine this key issue at hand. Furthermore, mandating certain preconditions when vital interests are at stake can spawn opportunities for possible rogue actors. Doing so may invite these antagonists to take actions (such as inflicting, or merely *threatening* to inflict, a handful of casualties) that can force America's departure from areas where its vital interests lie. Consequently, the United States becomes a victim of its own policy.

Notes

[154] Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York: Pocket Books, a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1991), p. 89.

[155] Ibid. According to Woodward, Colin Powell felt this speech was part of Secretary Weinberger's titanic battle with Secretary of State George Schultz who routinely pushed for military solutions to the State's political problems.

[156] Ibid.

[157] Charles A. Stevenson, "The Evolving Clinton Doctrine on the Use of Force," *Armed Forces & Society*, vol. 22, no. 4, summer 1996, p. 515.

[158] See Woodward, p. 515. Colin Powell, Remarks at the National Press Club, 28 September, 1993, reprinted in Stephen Dagget and Nina Serafino, "The Use of Force: Key Contemporary Documents," Report 94-805F (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 1994), p. 34.

[159] The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, March 1990, p. 2 and 23.

[160] In a meeting with Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, General Colin Powell once remarked: "I am opposed to dramatic [military] action without the President having popular support." Notes taken during a meeting between Secretary of Defense Cheney and General Powell. See Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals' War*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), p. 34.

[161] General Colin Powell, USA, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1995), pp. 207-208, 279.

[162] As summarized by Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor. See Stevenson, p. 516.

[163] Stevenson, p. 518.

Notes

[164] William J. Clinton, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington D.C.: The White House, February 1996), p. iii. (Henceforth cited as NSSEE 1996)

[165] NSSEE 1996, p. 19.

[166] Stevenson, p. 511.

[167] Ronald Reagan, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington D.C.: The White House, January 1988) and George Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington D.C.: The White House, March 1990).

[168] Stevenson, p. 514.

[169] NSSEE 1996, p. 18.

Chapter 8

Conclusions and Recommendations

Avoidance of bloodshed should not be taken as an act of policy if our main concern is to preserve forces.

— Carl von Clausewitz

This study has examined the United States' *perceived* intolerance for casualties. In doing so, I have highlighted certain facts while also revealing several fallacies. By exploring the recent military operations in the Persian Gulf, Somalia, and Bosnia, this study has also provided implications for future armed forces employment. Oddly, this perception rests on a single, flimsy premise: *the American public cannot tolerate casualties*. This premise, which has led to countless political assumptions, dictums, and politico-military doctrine, is by itself not valid. This final chapter dissects this premise, draws conclusions, and finally provides recommendations for the U.S. political and military leadership.

The Paradox Unveiled

The prospect of casualties has emerged as a key political constraint. When senior Pentagon officials and military officers discuss how the U.S. might intervene in a sudden outbreak of violence, the likelihood of combat and the probable magnitude of U.S. casualties dominate their deliberations.[170] Conventional wisdom holds that a prospect of

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American casualties will rapidly undermine domestic support for any military operation. This study refutes this assumption.

A deeper understanding of public opinion regarding American military intervention can enhance U.S. regional strategies. When the public takes into account the perceived benefits of an operation, the interests at stake, and the principles being promoted, the evidence that suggests that the public cannot tolerate casualties is flimsy. Most Americans do not want lives to be sacrificed for any but the most compelling and promising causes; therefore, they look to their leaders to illuminate the vital interests and principles at stake. In fact, whenever this interplay has existed, the historical record suggests a rather *high* degree of public willingness to accept casualties. Leader consensus, as this study has shown, is vital to this calculus.

Evidently, past inferences drawn from U.S. experiences in Vietnam, Beirut, and Somalia are incomplete. The shock of casualties in these conflicts exposed flawed U.S. policies and created an impression of deaths suffered in vain. The American people desire results commensurate with the losses suffered. Consequently, the central role of leadership is crucial in determining domestic support for U.S. military involvement. The Persian Gulf War provides an excellent example. Because of President Bush's tireless efforts to illuminate the U.S. interests at stake, had American casualties been high, the U.S. public would likely have intensified its demands to escalate both the means and the ends of the conflict.[171] The 1993 Somalia debacle further showed the critical role of U.S. leadership. The premises upon which initial support had been built — certain accomplishment of a limited humanitarian objective at low cost — were eroded by subsequent events. In addition, the ensuing loss of confidence was compounded by a

failure on the part of U.S. leaders to attend to the eroding bases of support. As Frank J. Stech stated, "[U.S. leaders] must communicate the goals of policies and the objectives of military operations clearly and simply enough so that the widest of audiences can envision the ways and the means being used to reach those goals."[172] Paradoxically, recent U.S. history is characterized by the American public looking to its leaders for clarity and rationale for U.S. military intervention, while at the same time, these same leaders are looking to an uninformed public through poll data *before* committing to a political stance. Consequently, the media is left by itself having substantial influence over both political and public perceptions. Such unopposed influence gives rise to the heralded "CNN effect."

Ramifications

Presently, it is not clear what the impact will be for the U.S. military to include casualty limitation as a cornerstone of its doctrine. Currently, U.S. military doctrine is sprinkled with references to casualty sensitivity. For example, the official U.S. Army doctrinal manual for operations, FM 100-5, declares that "the American people expect decisive victory and *abhor unnecessary casualties*" [emphasis added].[173] However, the Army has not monopolized this perception. The Joint Chiefs of Staff's *Joint Vision 2010* states: "The American people still continue to expect us to win any engagement, but they will also *expect* us to be *more efficient in protecting lives* and resources while accomplishing the mission successfully" [emphasis added].[174]

The trend in military policy is to avoid casualties altogether. While this is an admirable goal, the U.S. cannot afford to advertise it as fundamental policy. Guarantees of risk-free military adventures would only serve to undermine America's political will

should the U.S. incur so much as a handful of casualties. Events in the Gulf War air campaign showed that an enemy can disrupt U.S. operations by merely inflicting minimal losses on American forces or callously placing a handful of civilians in harm's way. By proclaiming the absolute requirement for clean wars, the United States, as Mark Conversino has suggested, is setting the stage for its own "psychological defeat and political paralysis."[175] Most defense policy pundits such as Karl Eikenberry and Edward Luttwak subscribe to this sentiment — war is becoming "such a high-priced venture as to make it an impractical instrument of foreign policy."[176] Certainly, the U.S. may be exposing itself to real, long-term risks.

"Post-Heroic" Conditions

Most of the American military and political establishment has acquiesced to this stance — a stance predicated on the faulty assumption that the American public cannot and will not tolerate casualties. By revolutionizing its military concepts and methods, the U.S. is taking steps to minimize the combat risks to U.S. military personnel in hopes of increasing the American public's support for future military interventions. By doing so, the military has succumbed to the propositions of such critics as Edward Luttwak. Within his thesis of "post-heroic warfare," Luttwak emphasizes unmanned, long-range weaponry, remote forces with small combat echelons, and air crews that launch standoff weapons — future technologies aimed at increasing the U.S.' ability to use force remotely, accurately, and discriminately. While these innovations appear promising, the fact remains that the basis behind this technology push is artificial. Technology cannot substitute for policy. Furthermore, as Eliot Cohen concedes, "[t]he speciation of munitions brings unusual capabilities, but it also poses the risk of creating forces so

specialized that they lack flexibility, and weapons so expensive that commanders will have only slender inventories to use when a war starts."[177]   Certainly there are ways to improve upon any military plan if casualty reduction is the key consideration.   But, as Karl Eikenberry warns, the U.S. must ensure that *overwhelming force* does not give way to *overwhelming conservatism* or military paralysis.[178]

The Truth of War

Aspiring to be both global hegemon and righteous democracy, the U.S. has struggled with the dilemma of using its vast power while satisfying the self-imposed requirement that it act in a morally defensive manner.   Unfortunately, the brutal fact remains that force works by destroying and killing.   As General Tecumseh Sherman stated when he besieged Atlanta: "War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it."[179]   This does not imply that the U.S. should stop taking steps to minimize casualties.   However, by only *implying* casualty limitation in an order, subordinate commanders still can choose to accept losses if he deems it necessary.   On the other hand, if battle losses are explicitly objectionable, the distinguishable elements of men and mission soon become blurred.

Furthermore, current JCS guidance states that future risks and expenditures "will be even more closely scrutinized than they are at present."[180]   If the dominant military culture becomes one in which the cause for each and every casualty is meticulously researched, and blame is routinely assigned, future U.S. armed forces may be ill prepared for the inevitable big battle lurking over the horizon.[181]   These possibilities highlight the inescapable course for the future of America's armed forces.   Unless certain policies and doctrines are re-examined, the U.S. may find itself a muscle-bound superpower unable to thwart future major aggression.

Recommendations

While this study has unveiled inadequacies in American policy regarding its armed forces, there are certain recommendations that could circumvent this current and alarming politico-military trend.

First, the U.S. needs to reevaluate *casualty limitation* as a cornerstone of its military doctrine. As discussed, an implicit goal of minimizing casualties is sound and offers commanders operational latitude. Although the likelihood and magnitude of U.S. casualties may be at the forefront of political deliberations, it cannot impinge on military options. One must not shackle the military and political leaders' flexibility by allowing only a single, channeled course of action predicated on force preservation. A doctrine that seeks to preserve rather than destroy inevitably gives rise to ill-fated "Maginot Line" strategies.[182] As Eikenberry coldly reminds us, "soldiers are ultimately a means, not an end."[183]

Second, U.S. political and military leaders must be aggressive and forthright in selling the public on the merits of impending or current military intervention. U.S. political leadership must provide clearly defined objectives, articulate the interests at stake, and ensure bipartisan support. As this study demonstrates, public support can erode if U.S. policy and objectives are questionable. Consequently, the American public must be informed of (and understand) the "why" as well as the "what."

Third, key U.S. political leaders should communicate to potential adversaries America's will and resolve, instead of broadcasting its perceived "dove-ish" intolerances. The evolving nature of U.S. enemies could make high casualties likely in future confrontations if regional antagonists continue to perceive a weakness in America's

armor. The administration and key Department of State leaders must exploit past public sentiments that have led to cries for escalation and decisive victory ("Pearl Harbor effect"). As this study demonstrates, an aggressive and vindictive public response to enemy aggression is prevalent in American society. By referring to such instances and publicizing this American tendency during presidential addresses, congressional debates, and Department of State negotiations, U.S. leaders will reinforce America's coercive posture. Consequently, the U.S. leadership will not only be placing the enemy at the mercy of an enraged public, but will be strengthening future deterrence strategies as well. Possible regional adversaries would then have to consider whether their actions will prompt the U.S. public to push their decision-makers to escalate quickly and unpredictably — beyond the limitations the enemy might wish to place on the conflict.

Finally, the administration and military leadership must not deceive the American public about war. War is bloody. The American public must understand that war is not a science, and that it brings death to more than just the enemy. While the U.S. strives to minimize these horrors by subscribing to a futuristic "bloodless war" theory, it must not forget that these goals are just as the name implies: *goals*. This does not suggest, however, that the U.S. should stop its research and development of evolving technologies. Quite the contrary. Nevertheless, the U.S. government must not instill a public confidence that it knows it cannot keep. Furthermore, a proactive and forthright posture could help dismantle the negative effects of media reporting.

Ultimately, the issue of casualties is not, and should not be, the deciding factor in the employment of the United States armed forces. The American public will accept casualties provided the civilian leadership persuades them of that necessity. Although

contemporary and evolving doctrines may run counter to this sentiment, U.S. policy-makers can easily re-focus and prepare the American military and public for tomorrow's threats to national interests.

Notes

[170] Edward Luttwak, "A Post-Heroic Military Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 74, no. 4, July/August 1996, p. 36.

[171] RAND Research Brief, "The Effects of War Casualties on U.S. Public Opinion," Santa Monica, CA, June 1994, p. 2. As discussed in chapter 2 of this study, see Eric V. Larson, *Casualties and Consensus* (Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, 1996) for a complete analysis of the role of casualties in domestic support for U.S. military operations.

[172] Frank J. Stech, "Winning CNN Wars," *Parameters,* fall 1994, p. 51.

[173] Department of the Army, *FM 100-5 Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993), chapter 1, p. 3. Consequently, the ambiguity surrounding the natural follow-on question,"what constitutes *unnecessary*?" continues to plague and hinder U.S. defense policy-making.

[174] Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2010* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), p. 8.

[175] Major Mark J. Conversino, USAF, "Sawdust Superpower: Perceptions of U.S. Casualty Intolerance in the Post-Gulf War Era," *Strategic Review*, vol. XXV, no. 1 (winter 1997), p. 22.

[176] Karl W. Eikenberry, "Take No Casualties," *Parameters,* summer 1996, p. 117.

[177] Eliot Cohen, "The Mystique of U.S. Air Power," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 1994), p. 116.

[178] Eikenberry, p. 117.

[179] See Cohen, p. 123.

[180] *Joint Vision 2010*, p. 8.

[181] Eikenberry, p. 117.

[182182] The fear of another Somme or Verdun crippled British and French interwar policy-making and military doctrine. Consequently, it allowed for a defensive stance and granted the Germans the initiative. For a more complete analysis of France's Maginot Line strategy, note J.F.C. Fuller's *A Military History of the Western World* Vol III (New York: Da Capo Press, 1956), pp. 381-385, or Eliot Cohen and John Gooch's *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), pp. 218-220.

[183] Eikenberry, p. 117.

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